WISDOM AND CULT

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VIEWS
OF CULT IN THE WISDOM LITERATURES
OF ISRAEL AND THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Posing of the Problem

A perusal of Old Testament scholarship during the past century points to an impressive concern to define and compare the nature and development of the three major traditions of Israelite religion: prophecy, cult, and wisdom. Among the most suggestive inquiries into the realm of these Old Testament traditions have been those studies which have sought to define the relationships between the various institutions and traditions of prophet, priest, and sage by centering primarily upon the critical assessments expressed by one institution and its traditions toward another. Such a critical approach has provided the modern scholar a better understanding not only of how an institution has been viewed in terms of its character and value by contemporaries outside its own sphere, but at the same time has provided incisive insight into the institution and its members which have given vent to an assessment of a contemporary group. Of course, such critical efforts by scholars to analyze the viewpoints of one institution and its traditions which speak concerning a contemporary group are fraught with major difficulties including the realization that each institution, its traditions and its individual members, has its own unique diversity which issues from conflicting attitudes from competing members, factions, and ideologues, and the realization that institutions, their traditions and individual members, often share certain ideas and elements of language which are inherited from a common cultural milieu.[1] A case in point is the central dogma of retribution which is shared by prophet, priest, and sage, though, of course, the general concept of Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang was given its own specific set of nuances by each tradition. Furthermore, it has become increasingly evident that a tremendous amount of diversity exists among modern scholars as pertains to which pieces of literature belong to which institution and its traditions.[2] Even so, by assuming this approach, important, interpretative analyses of these institutions and their respective literatures and ideologies have resulted. In earlier years, the primary sphere of concern was the relationship between prophecy and cult,[3] with primary emphasis being given to the prophetic view of the Israelite cultus,[1] while more recently growing interest has been elicited in the area of prophecy and wisdom.[2]

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[1] See the comments of James L. Crenshaw, "Review of Isaiah and Wisdom, J. William Whedbee," Interpretation, XXXVI (1972), 74-77.

[2] If trends continue, we may see in the not too distant future every bit of Old Testament literature being assigned to the creation or the influence of the wise, who, only a short time ago were the unwanted, illegitimate children of Old Testament research. Thus Weinfeld even concludes that the once time-honored cultic life situation of Deuteronomy was actually a sapiential one, for the real authors of Deuteronomy were not priests, but the wise scribes (Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1972). For a more judicious treatment of supposed wisdom texts or wisdom influenced texts, supported by the rigorous application of a precise methodology for identifying wisdom literature and wisdom influence, see James L. Crenshaw, "Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon 'Historical' Literature," JBL, LXXXVIII (1969), pp. 129-142.

[3] See, e.g. Alfred Haldar, Associations of Cult Prophets among the Ancient Semites (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksellsboktryckeri, 1945);

In view of the recent proliferation of scholarly literature concerning wisdom literature, it is surprising that no systematic examination has been undertaken to explore the relationship of wisdom and cult. Such a study would be most significant at a time when continuing efforts are being made to delineate the office, function, thought world, and literature of the sages. We shall conduct a critical examination of the evaluation of cult by the sages of the ancient Near East to determine what place is given to cult.

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and Aubrey Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1962).

[1] See W. Beyerlin, *Die Kulttraditionen Israels in der Verkündigung des Prophetes Micha*, FRANT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1959); R. E. Clements, *Prophecy and Covenant*, SBT XLIII (Naperville, Ill.: Alec Allenson, Inc., 1965); R. Hentschke, *Die Stellung der vorexilischen Schriftpropheten zum Kultus*, BZAW, LXXV (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1957); H. W. Hertzberg, "Die prophetische Kritik am Kult," *ThLZ*, LXXV (1950), 219-26; J. P. Hyatt, *The Prophetic Criticism of Israelite Worship*, Goldenson Lectures (Cincinnati: H. U. C. Press, 1963); *Prophetic Religion* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1947); O. Plöger, "Priester und Prophet," *ZAW*, LXIII (1951), 157-92; R. Rendtorff, "Priesterliche Kulttheologie und prophetische Kultpolemik," *ThLZ*, LXXXI (1956), 339-42; H. H. Rowley, "Ritual and the Hebrew Prophets," *JSS*, I (1956), 338-60.

[2] James L. Crenshaw, "The Influence of the Wise upon Amos," *ZAW*, LXXIX (1967), 42-52; Johannes Fichtner, "Jesaja unter den Weisen," *Gottes Weisheit* (Stuttgart: Calwer), 18-26; J. Lindblom, "Wisdom in the Old Testament Prophets," *SVT*, III (1955), 192-204; William McKane, *Prophets and Wise Men*, SBT, XLIV (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1965); Samuel Terrien, "Amos and Wisdom," *Israel's Prophetic Heritage* (New York: Harper, 1962), 108-15; J. W. Whedbee, *Isaiah and Wisdom* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971); and H. W. Wolff, *Amos' geistige Heimat*, WMANT, XVIII (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964).

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B. The Question of Wisdom and Cult in Recent Scholarship

In surveying the major interpretations of the sages of ancient Israel and their literary productions, it becomes most surprising that many scholars have believed that an examination of the relationship of wisdom and cult is nigh impossible, not because of the difficulties to which we have referred, but rather, it seems, because most Old Testament savants have accepted the questionable assumption that cult was of little or no concern whatsoever to the sage. To demonstrate this point, let us purvey a brief summary of viewpoints of the major scholarly literature with respect to our topic.

The most extensive, and in fact the only, analysis of wisdom and cult that could be deemed as comprehensive in scope was undertaken in the rather dated, though still quite useful, monograph published in 1933 by Johannes Fichtner.[1] In a rather scanty ten pages, Fichtner summarized the ancient Near Eastern sapiential comments pertaining to cult. His examination of Egyptian wisdom literature led him to conclude that older Egyptian wisdom made no efforts whatsoever to speak to cult, and, in fact, that only four sages in the entire sapiential literature expressed any views of cult whatsoever: Meri-ka-Re, Ani, Amen-em-Opet, and the Papyrus Insinger, thus leading him to conclude that cult was of little interest to Egyptian wise men, and the few references to cult are interpreted to be of little significance, since the sages tended to relegate cultic religion to the periphery of their interest, and to emphasize the ethical import of cult while denying any import to cultic ritual. A case in point is Amen-em-Opet who, in his chapter concerning the contrast between the "silent man" and the "heated man," is said by Fichtner to be an attack on the value of cult as opus operatum, and to teach that the "silent" man finds life even if he does not participate in cult, whereas the "heated man" is destroyed even if he zealously participates as a priest or a layman in cult. Thus Fichtner suggests that the sage teaches that the "silent man" may find "life" even if he does not participate in cult. Even the Papyrus Insinger which is filled with admonitions concerning the cult is said by Fichtner to result not from an interest by the sapiential writer to fulfill the legal dictates of the cult, but rather from his ethical concerns, especially in regard to caring for the poor who are fed by means of sacrifices. And the sage teaches that cultic participation will not be accepted unless the observant cultist is ethically aware of his social responsibilities in providing for the sustenance of the poor.

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[1] _Die altorientalische Weisheit in ihrer israelitisch-jüdischen Ausprägung_, BZAW, LXII (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann), 36-46.

Fichtner then proceeds into the area of Mesopotamian wisdom literature, and here is forced to admit that the wise were positive in their orientation to the Babylonian cults, though he suggests the highly tenuous argument that the wise were part and parcel of the priesthood, and thus their many references which often convey a positive evaluation of cultic religion may be easily explained.[1]

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[1] Fichtner bases his argument on the observation made by Meissner

Finally, Fichtner enters into the realm of the Israelite wise. With regard to Proverbs, Fichtner argues that the older parts of Proverbs demonstrate almost no concern at all for the cultus, and when the cult is mentioned, it is done so with a negative critique. The only positive evaluation of cultic religion by the older wise rests in the practice of prayer. Then following a rather truncated examination of Job, he concludes: "der Kult spielt also für das Hiobbuch keine Rolle." Koheleth is also given rather short shrift by Fichtner, whose main comment is that the Israelite sage placed morality and ethical behavior high above the practices and rituals of cultic relgion. Even Sirach's numerous references to cult are evaluated by Fichtner as being of only secondary importance to individual ethics, and even the references to cult demonstrate a

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that the same Akkadian ideogram is used for both priest and scribe (Babylonien und Assyrien, p. 326). However this does not lead Landsberger to accept the idea that the wise were priests: "One must castigate as false romanticism the conception of the so-called Priesterweisheit, still to be found in secondary handbooks. The scribes, although the greater number of them were deeply religious, were completely a lay group. ("Scribal Concepts of Education," City Invincible, A Symposium on Urbanization and Cultural Development in the Ancient Near East [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958], p. 98). Furthermore, Oppenheim has forcefully argued that it was the sphere of the court, not that of the temple, which gave shape to the Mesopotamian artistic, literary, and scholarly traditions, and provided the circles through which the traditions were nourished and transmitted ("The Intellectual in Mesopotamian Society," Daedalus, CIV [1975], pp. 40f.).

primary concern for the ethical behavior of the wise and righteous cultic participant.

Fichtner concludes his survey with brief references to the Wisdom of Solomon, Tobit, Ezra, Aristeas, IV Maccabees, and Pirke Aboth, and concludes that there is evidence for a growing interest in cult. Thus one may see an historical development from old wisdom, which protested against the overstressing of the value of cultic religion and affirmed the superiority of ethical behavior over cultic ritual, to late wisdom, most especially Pirke Aboth, in which the value of cultic religion was "dangerously" accentuated.[1]

The problems inherent in Fichtner's investigation, in addition to the obvious one of perfunctory brevity, include an omission of many important texts, an omission not entirely due to an oversight by the scholar, but often due to the fact that much of the literature we now have was neither available nor critically investigated. He does not examine such important Egyptian sapiential pieces as Ipu-wer, 'Onchsheshonqy, "The Dialogue between a Man Tired of Life with his Soul," a Harper's Song, "In Praise of Learned Scribes," "The Instruction of a Man for his Son," and "The Instruction of Sehetep-ib-Re." As concerns Mesopotamia, there was no investigation of Sumerian

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[1] He concludes this section by stating: "Neben die ethische Forderung, die die ältere isr.-jüd. Wsht fast völlig und auch die jüngere noch stark beherrscht, tritt in der jüngsten Entwicklung immer deutlicher die kultische, die in den Pirke Aboth sogar die überragende Bedeutung des ethischen Gebotes zu gefährden droht" (p. 46).

Proverbs, the Sumerian "A Man and His God," "The Advice to a Prince," "Counsels of a Pessimist," and the "Shamash Hymn." In addition, his tendency to regard the older sages as secularistic humanists, his lack of appreciation for the concerns of the priests for ethical behavior, and his conclusion that the wise evidence only passing concern for cult while exalting ethical behavior are subject to serious criticisms which we shall unfold in the following chapters.

An earlier study by Paul Humbert which takes a more judicious view of wisdom and cult is hampered only by a failure to explore in depth several incisive observations.[1] Humbert is still not a convert to the idea that the wise of Egypt and Israel were overly concerned with cult, as his comment demonstrates:

> Les devoirs envers la divinité ne jouent qu'un role de second plan dans les écrits gnomiques égyptiens et israëlites, cela même leur est déjà commun.

Yet he cogently argues that there was not necessarily a divorce between wisdom and cult in Egypt, but rather, on the contrary, the Egyptian sages recommended faithful practice of cultic duties. The same is true of Israel, for while there are not many references to cult in Israelite wisdom literature, especially in Proverbs, still the sages were not hostile toward cult. In fact he argues:

> Mais cette discrétion sur les devoirs proprement cultuels n'implique aucunement leur rejet, car maint passage en présuppose au contraire l'exercice.

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[1] Recherchés sur les sources égyptiennes de la litterature sapientiale d'Israël (Neuchatel: Paul Attinger, 1929).

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Thus he argues that wisdom could proceed along the periphery of cult without ignoring it. Humbert concludes that the wise, like the prophets, were more concerned with ethical religion than external rites, though neither group completely rejected their importance. The major weakness of Humbert's treatment of cult is his affirmation of the secondary place of cult in Egyptian and Israelite literature which obviously influenced his own abbreviated analysis of the topic.

Another well known French treatment of the sages of the ancient Near East is the massive volume of Deusberg and Fransen, who, unfortunately, rarely mention the topic of wisdom and cult, and when doing so usually comment on the lack of interest shown by the sages of Israel in cultic religion or on the critical evaluation by the sages when they assess the cultic institution. To these scholars Proverbs presents a rather detached apathy with respect to cultic religion, choosing rather to place primary emphasis on individual morality:

> Sa religion est certainement celle d'Israël, mais allégée ou amputée de son zéle pour la *tōrah*, pour l'alliance, pour le culte, et assez indifférente, en entour, à l'horreur de l'idolatrie."[1]

In explaining such a striking observation, a suggestion is made which would be carried to an extreme by McKane: the older wise were governmental and royal functionaries who set forth a secular *politique*, devoid of the doctrinaire idiosyncracies of religious traditions and institutions.[1] While almost ignoring the matter of cult in Job, they comment that Koheleth was quite comparable to the prophets and psalms in his opposition to a ritual detached from morality. The comments made concerning Sirach are deprecatory of the Jerusalem sage whose interests in cult are taken as evidence of his being a rigid legalist, and alas possibly even a priest! But Sirach is rescued somewhat by Duesberg and Fransen who apologetically stress that Sirach is really concerned with the moral character of the worshipper, and, in all truthfulness, deprecates the religious value of cultic rites.

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[1] H. Duesberg et I. Fransen, *Les scribes inspirés* (Maredsous: Éditions de Maredsous, 1966) p. 332. Their observations are scattered throughout their book.

Our topic fares little improvement in Scott's rather simplified treatment of the sages and their literature, for he almost completely passes over the subject except for a brief comment that is all too typical of scholars who have approached wisdom while still maintaining their undying devotion to the "highest expression of Israelite religion," the prophets.[2] Scott mentions in passing Prov. 21:3 and 16:6 following a comment in which he assumes that the wise almost ignored cultic religion and its ceremonies, feeling that 21:3 may be taken as a "prophetic summary" of the prophetic view of cult, while affirming that 16:6 was possibly influenced by the prophets, thus making the sages of Israel the spiritual and ethical inferiors to their prophetic contemporaries.

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[1] Prophets and Wise Men.

[2] R. B. Y. Scott, The Way of Wisdom (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1971), pp. 123-24. Rankin's comment that the wise actually influenced the prophets in this case is just as possible, though we lean to the position that both groups had their own reasons for criticizing cult (Israel's Wisdom Literature [Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark], 1954).

Whybray has briefly dealt with the views of the wise concerning cult in his unsuccessful efforts to regard the Succession Narrative as wisdom literature.[1] Whybray regarded what he believed to be a paucity of remarks made by the wise concerning cult to be directly linked to their very unique view of God's working through the channels of individual men and natural events rather than by a direct intervention by the deity in the course of salvation history, thus leading them to diminish the importance of the cult and its institutions as a means of communication between God and man and as the conduit of divine blessing. However, he rejects the argument that the cult lay outside the sphere of concerns of the wise, since such could be a valid argument only if there existed no references to cult whatsoever, but such was not true, for the wise did speak to the value of cult as "one aspect of the 'way of life' which led to happiness and prosperity." However, the assumed paucity of references to cult in Israelite as well as in Egyptian wisdom literature led Whybray to conclude, without blushing, that such demonstrated the rather small position cult held among the interests of the wise.[1] Once more Whybray, like his predecessors, chooses to argue that ethical conduct is the primary domain of the wise, though prayer is an important but not really a "cultic" pursuit.

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[1] R. N. Whybray, The Succession Narrative, SBT, XIV (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1968), 66f.

Hans Heinrich Schmid in his superb study of the wisdom traditions in Israel and the ancient Near East has offered a very brief mentioning of wisdom and cult in Egypt, and while we find a number of his comments to be disputable, he has made several suggestive comments which unfortunately suffer from the failure on his part to develop their possible ramifications.[2] Schmid addresses himself to the appearance of references to cult in literature of the First Intermediate as well as the other periods following the Old Kingdom in which one finds some mentioning of cult, and especially selects for scrutiny a number of texts from Meri-ka-Re in which one finds side by side a do-ut-des faith and, paradoxically, critical comments concerning cult. Now Schmid proceeds to argue that the failure of the sages of the Old Kingdom to refer to cult was primarily due to the unquestioned acceptance of the importance of cult as self-evident. There were no problems with regard to cult, and thus there was no critical reflection by the wise. Secondly, the wise were involved in non-mythical and non-cultic understandings of time and reality and, therefore, blazed a path in their own particular way. However, according to Schmid, with the chaos of the First Intermediate period, the wise were forced to enter into an evaluation of their orientation towards cult. The powers of individuality of this period demanded an *Auseinandersetzung* with the previously accepted cultic practices. What had been formerly self-evident, has become the subject of rigid scrutiny. Thus cult along with views of God and King had to be reassessed in a new comprehensive analysis of the totality of reality as perceived by the sages. In this reassessment one does not find the wise espousing cultic participation without some duly noted reservations. Schmid contends that whether or not a cultic activity is to be pursued depends entirely upon the ability to perceive in that activity an order-inducing and sustaining process. If such corresponded to the dictates of order and helped in maintaining order, then it should be done, but if not, the practice should be rejected. Yet throughout the sapiential reflections, the wise had views radically different from cult, especially as concern myth and time,[1] thus causing them never to totally embrace cultic religion. Unfortunately Schmid ignores the question of cult in Mesopotamia and Israel and in the majority of the Egyptian texts. His ideas are intriguing, but he fails to adequately develop them.

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[1] Whybray makes some rather unfortunate choices when he points to the "paucity" of cultic references in Egyptian Wisdom literature, for he uses as his examples Meri-ka-Re and Ani. Now we will deal with these two sapiential pieces later in Chapter II; however, of the 13 instructions given by Ani, three concern one's wife, two deal with the observances of social etiquette, one for each of the following: home and garden, mother, the "foreign woman", and control of the tongue, while four concern the cult! Thus almost one-third of his instruction concerns the cult. In terms of Meri-ka-Re, out of 130 preserved lines of instruction which deal with a myriad of subjects, approximately 20 refer to the cult, or 15 percent. One might as well say the paucity of references to the control of the tongue in these two texts demonstrates the lack of interest of the sages in correct speaking, which, of course, would be an absurd deduction.

[2] H.-H. Schmid, Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit, BZAW, CI (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1966), 50-53.

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[1] We find ourselves puzzled by the strong contrasts Schmid makes between wisdom and myth, for it is our opinion that the intellectual progenitors of the sages were the cosmological myths.

Finally, the late dean of Old Testament scholars, Gerhard von Rad, devoted a short excursus to wisdom and cult which he refused to make a major subject of his investigation of wisdom due to his conclusion that the wise never regarded cultic matters to be of any primary interest.[1] After briefly referring to a small number of proverbs pertaining to cult in Proverbs and the passage in Sir. 34:19f., he states: "But in all this, the concern is not with the cultic, but with human presuppositions which are indispensable for cultic participation." Thus von Rad aligns himself with earlier scholars who had argued that the ethical predisposition of the individual worshipper was the only real concern of the wise. Von Rad also speaks to the problem of the usage of what may be described as "cultic terminology", and suggests two possible methods of approaching this issue. First, it might be concluded that the wise used such language in a "spiritualized" way, thus demonstrating that, intellectually speaking, the wise had "outgrown" the faith and practices of cultic religion. The second suggestion, more preferable to von Rad, is the argument that the wise, not being priests, had no opportunity to use the terms in their cultic context, for they spoke in the "humanized, generalized" language of everyday existence. Finally, von Rad admits that there is still a wisdom and cult problem which has not been addressed, which seems to be in the area of a comparison between the various ways that the wise and the priests sought to approach "order", and in the area of the relation between wisdom and cultic genres, especially the hymn and the individual thanksgiving.[1]

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[1] Wisdom in Israel (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), pp. 186-189.

In summation, the question of wisdom and cult has rarely been raised, and when raised it was usually answered with the passing remark that cult rested only on the periphery of sapiential concern, for the wise were more concerned with ethical behavior, and therefore they relegated cultic participation to a very minor position. If such an assessment were true, it would indeed be rather astounding in itself, and would lead us to ask why the wise would ignore or, at the very best, severly criticize and then delegate to obscurity the cultic realm. Thus it will be our first task to closely examine the major wisdom texts of the ancient Near East to determine if the wise were so inclined to treat with cool aloofness and utter disdain the practices and beliefs of their cultic contemporaries, or if, as we shall hope to demonstrate, such aloofness and disdain are presumptions of a number of scholars who have failed to examine thoroughly the Near Eastern wisdom sources.

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[1] Von Rad's point is important, for, as we shall see, there are abundant wisdom texts which contain didactic poems which are most similar to the cultic genres of the psalms, leading us to ask whether or not such were actually composed by the wise, and if so, whether or not they were intended for cultic use.

C. Towards a Definition of Cult

Of course one of the major problems in proceeding with our investigation, and also one that has plagued earlier scholars in their comments about cult and wisdom, is that of defining the meaning and the limits of the term cult.[1] Such a definition is no easy task as a perusal of major cultic studies of the past decade demonstrates, but we shall proceed with the following. Cult is the ordered response of a society and its individuals to their belief that a deity has appeared within its midst.[2] The concern of cult is to maintain a continuing relationship with that deity in the hopes of securing divine blessings for the community by means of obeying the commands of the deity, providing for the deity's needs, propitiating his anger, and maintaining the integrity of his sanctity which must be guarded from the contact with or incursions from the profane. Thus cult is seen as the channel for the blessings of the deity, the means for avoiding the destructive power of the divine holiness, and the method of revelatory communications between deity and society.

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[1] For a very useful and succinct examination of the major critical approaches to cult since the period of German Romanticism, see H.-J Kraus, Worship in Israel (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966), pp. 1-25.

[2] Walter Harrelson, From Fertility Cult to Worship (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 1 and 36.

Now this "response" made by a society and its individuals to a deity comes to consist of holy places, holy times, holy personnel, holy objects, and holy rituals.[1] Holy is taken to mean that which is separated from the profane sphere and dedicated entirely to divine service. Thus holy places are areas of sacred territory, a sacred river, mountain, tree, temple, etc., intimately linked with the divine sphere where perhaps a theophany of the deity was believed to have occurred and may continue to occur or even where the deity is assumed to dwell. Holy times involve certain sacred seasons of the year in which the beneficent powers of the deity are at their high point, or conversely, are at their low point and thus need revitalizing by cultic activities. Holy personnel, of course, includes the dedication of certain men and women to divine service who may approach the realm of the holy, since they or their orders are in a perpetual state of sanctification, and may therefore avoid the destructive side of the power of holiness unleased against those who are not in this state of holiness. Holy objects usually involve the paraphernalia of the cultic place, especially the altar for sacrifices, the incense burners, idols, and countless other objects devoted to sacred use. Of course cultic rituals were those activities deemed important for the expression of the devotion to and celebration of the community's god; the means by which the anger of the deity was avoided; and the ways enabling the profane community to enter and leave the sphere of the holy, to share the blessings of the beneficent side of the power of holiness, and to avoid the destructive side of that same power, to receive divine communications, to reaffirm acceptance of the divine commands and to exist in communion with the deity. Thus typical rituals involved various kinds of sacrifice, libations, ablutions, prayers, psalms, hymns, fasts, and observation of certain holy times.

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[1] See Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel, II (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 271-273.

Finally there is produced by cultic officials a wealth of cultic traditions in specifically cultic forms which contain such things as the communications from the deity himself, prescriptions for various rituals, texts of liturgical prayers, laments, hymns, cultic legends which speak of the founding of a cult or a cultic site, festal legends, liturgies of service, priestly instructions directed towards the communicants, and cultic myths, especially centering around creation.

Thus in our investigation of the views of the wise expressed towards cult, we shall not limit ourselves merely to sacrifice or even to cultic ritual, a self-imposed limitation by earlier scholars which, we believe, led to the denigration of the importance of the realm of cult to the ancient wise. Thus we shall be concerned to look for references to cultic places, times, personnel, rituals, beliefs, and forms and language, and we shall especially attempt to assess how the wise viewed these various components of the cult, and, in so doing, to attempt to compare them with the ideas of the cultists themselves. Now with regard to cultic forms and language we will look primarily at prayers and various kinds of psalms with the purpose of discovering if the wise used and perhaps even created cultic genres in their writings.

D. The Task Before Us

Wisdom has been cogently defined as the wise man's quest for self-understanding, an understanding in terms of the relationships of the wise with things, persons, deity, and, we would add, with the societal and religious institutions of the society in which a sage lived and functioned.[1] Such a quest was founded upon the belief of the wise that there existed an all embracing "order" to the compartments of reality, whether he called such *Ma'at*, *Ṣedaqâh*, or the system of *mes*, an order often bearing the connotations of truth, orderliness, and even justice.[2] Thus the wise man's task was to discover his place, function, and time within the structure of this order which permeated the spheres of the cosmos, society, man, and the realm and nature of the holy. By successfully integrating himself within these spheres of reality, of "order", the wise man thereby becomes aware of the meaning of existence for himself and may achieve self-understanding, knowing who he is, and what he is about. And by gaining harmony with the spheres of order, he achieves harmony within himself. But the quest was motivated by the attempt of the wise to master life, for wisdom was very much a search for security in what very often turned out to be a relatively insecure existence. Thus the wise man through his endowment by the gods of wisdom had within his grasp the means to come to terms with the demands of living in accord with reality and to know how to act or what to do in every conceivable situation and every possible time. By his wisdom he had the means to achieve the blessings and rewards of life: honor, respect, longevity, family, prosperity, and peace within himself. This resulted from the wise's attributing a beneficent quality to the spheres of order. Now while it is true the wise never naively ignored the destructive, and even seemingly hostile character of reality, they denied that such could overwhelm the wise man who had found how to live in harmony with the components of reality, and only the fools, the ones untrained in the ways of wisdom, were destroyed by the destructive forces in reality. This belief became legislated in the dogma of retribution, a dogma that almost led to the demise of the wisdom tradition in the ancient Near East.

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[1] Crenshaw, "Method in Determining Wisdom Influence on 'Historical' Literature," pp. 130-32.

[2] See H. H. Schmid, *Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung*, BHT, XL (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1968).

Now if the wise were comprehensive in their attempts to assess the compartments of reality and to discover the proper relationships between these compartments and themselves, which is an oft heard claim, it would be amazing indeed to find the wise ignoring the realm of cult, especially when the wise themselves admitted certain limitations in their quest for understanding, and,

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in difficult times, when their faith in the principle of retribution was sore afflicted, the only recourse appeared to be a turning to divine mercy and aid. So we should not be terribly surprised as we proceed with our own quest if the comments of past scholars, and the relative obscurity of cult in modern analyses of wisdom literature, were hastily made conclusions and oversights which did not result from a close scrutiny of the appropriate texts. Thus we shall begin with the literature of the Egyptian wise, move into the realm of Mesopotamian wisdom literature, and conclude with Israelite wisdom to determine what place cult may have had in the assessments of the sages of the ancient Near East with respect to the spheres of the order of reality. But we shall also be especially concerned with wisdom psalms, that is, didactic poems which are closely similar to the cultic psalms, especially since von Rad believes that this is one of the primary means by which the problem of wisdom and cult may be broached. And, as we stated earlier, our study should demonstrate not only how a particular tradition was viewed by contemporaries who were perhaps not professionally associated with that tradition, but at the same time should provide us with important insights into the thought world of the ancient sages themselves.

CHAPTER II

THE VIEWS OF CULT IN EGYPTIAN WISDOM LITERATURE

A. The World View of Egyptian Wisdom Literature

Ma'at and Wisdom. In one of the oldest extant pieces of Egyptian Wisdom Literature, "The Instruction of Ptah-hotep," the vizier of Pharaoh Izezi of the Fifth Dynasty, one immediately confronts the cornerstone upon which was erected the structure of wisdom thinking in ancient Egypt, an edifice which was to outlast all but the greatest of the pyramids:

> IF THOU ART A LEADER commanding the affairs of the multitude, seek out for thyself every beneficial deed until it may be that thy own affairs are without wrong. Justice[1] is great, and its appropriateness is lasting; it has not been disturbed since the time of him who made it,[2] (whereas) there is punishment for him who passes over its laws. It is the (right) path before him who knows nothing. Wrongdoing has never brought its undertaking into port. (It may be that) it is fraud that gains riches, (but) the strength of justice is that it lasts, and a man may say: "It is the property of my father."[3]

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[1] Ma'at. For an extensive examination of Ma'at in Egyptian literature, see C.-J. Bleeker, "L'idée de l'ordre cosmique dans l'ancienne Égypte," RHPhR, XLII (1962), 193-200.

[2] A reference to the creation and establishment of Ma'at as the order of the cosmos by the sun god Re (Siegfried Morenz, Ägyptische Religion [Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1960], p. 121).

[3] Ptah-hotep, ll. 84-94: ANET, p. 421. Aksel Volten has pinpointed the essence of the citation in his explanation: "Wir finden in der eben zitieren Ptahhotep Stelle den ägyptischen Schicksalglauben klar ausgedrückt. Gott und die Gerechtigkeit, die mit ihm identisch ist, lenken seit ewiger Zeit die Welt nach unveränderlichen vorausbestimmten Gesetzen." ("Der Begriff der Maat in den Ägyptischen Weisheitstex-

As may be deduced from this and numerous other sapiential texts,[1] Ma'at ("truth," "justice") is the constitutive order of creation established by the primeval creator deity to direct the harmonious regularity of the cosmos for all eternity. Yet, the passage elicits the further deduction that Ma'at is also the constitutive order of society, a point well taken, since it has been recognized for a long time that in Egyptian as well as other ancient Near Eastern thought, the two spheres of cosmos and society are inextricably bound. Furthermore, Ma'at is the constitutive order of the individual wise man who, instructed by wisdom, is able to live according to the dictates of Ma'at.[2]

In presupposing the static existence of world order in its cosmic, social, and anthropological spheres, sapiential proponents endeavored to observe, evaluate, and formulate the regulations of Ma'at into the written form of wisdom instructions which would, therefore, provide essential guidelines for enabling the adherent of wisdom to integrate himself in harmonious fashion within the ubiquitous compartments of orderly existence, and thus come to achieve both self-understanding, for the wise man is able by wisdom to understand and to

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ten," SPOA (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), p. 79).

[1] E.g., Meri-ka-Re, ll. 131f. (ANET, p. 417).

[2] Gese brings this point clearly into focus in his provocative monograph, Lehre und Wirklichkeit in der alten Weisheit (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1958), p. 12: "Der Begriff Maat umfasst zwei für uns unterschiedene Bereiche: die Ordnung des Kosmos und die Ordnung des menschlichen Lebens."

know his place and function within the order of the universe and society, and well-being, for the wise man is able to experience the beneficence attributed to the spheres of order provided for the one who existed in tune with that order.[1] At the same time the wisdom[2] devotee has the means by which he could avoid the disastrous pitfalls which resulted in being out of step with order, pitfalls which entrapped and destroyed the non-initiated. As Schmid has concisely observed in his brilliant monograph: "Weisheitliches Denken, Fragen und Lehren zielt auf die Eingliederung des menschlichen Verhaltens in die allen umfassende Weltordnung."[3]

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[1] Such a recognition of the religious basis of wisdom instruction in the concept of order permeating the creation which was brought into existence by the *Urgott* has caused more recent wisdom scholars to reject the once prevalent but erroneous view of wisdom as being crassly eudaemonistic and utilitarian in tenor and purpose, a view represented by Fichtner in his otherwise useful analysis of the wisdom literature in the ancient Near East (*Die altorientalische Weisheit in ihrer israelitisch-jüdischen Ausprägung*, BZAW, LXII [Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1933], 75f.). For more judicious assessments of this essentially religious character of wisdom literature, see A. De Buck, "Het Religieus Karakter der oudste egyptische Wijsheid," *NTT*, XXI (1932), 322-49; and Hellmut Brunner, "Der freie Wille Gottes in der ägyptischen Weisheit," *SPOA*, p. 203.

[2] There is some difficulty in finding an Egyptian word which corresponds to wisdom. The scribe is referred to as *s33*, and, therefore, "scribal wisdom" *s3t*. A much more rare word for wisdom is *íkkw*. The ideal of the Egyptian wise is referred to as *ḳbb* ('the cool man') who is characterized by 'silence' (*gr*), whereas the 'fool' is the *t3w*, or the 'envious' (*'wn-íb*). See Jean Leclant, "Documents nouveaux et points de vue récente sur les sagesses de l'Égypte ancienne," *SPOA*, p. 13.

[3] H. H. Schmid, *Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit*, BZAW, 101 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1966), 21.

Ma'at and Cosmology. According to Egyptian Mythology, the Egyptian *Urgott* (Re, Amon-Re, Ptah)[1] stood upon the primeval hill[2] which rose forth from the watery abyss,[3] and created the lower gods and subsequently the universe. In this act of creation, the creator deity established *Ma'at* (considered in mythological thought to be both the daughter and mother of Re)[4] as the divinely instituted order which permeated the cosmos. One sapiential text which reminisces about this primeval activity is "The Instruction for King Meri-ka-Re":

> Well directed are men, the cattle of the god. He made heaven and earth according to their desire, and he repelled the water-monster. He made the breath of life (for) their nostrils. They who have issued from his body are his images. He arises in heaven according to their desire. He made for them plants, animals, fowl, and fish to feed them. He slew his enemies and injured (even) his (own) children because they thought of making rebellion. HE MAKES THE LIGHT OF DAY according to their desire, and he *sails by* in order to see them, and when they weep he hears. He made for them rulers (even) in the egg, a supporter to support the back of the disabled. He made for them magic as weapons to ward off what might

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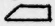
[1] See *ANET*, pp. 3-10, for various creation myths.

[2] The *Urhügel* was symbolized by the pharaonic pyramids and assumed the same hieroglyph as Ma'at: . In addition, the *Urhügel* was also presented as the foundation of the divine and royal thrones. Consequently, it seems likely that *Ma'at* was also seen to be the foundation of these thrones, symbolizing the concern of the gods and the pharaohs for justice and order (cf. H. Brunner, "Gerechtigkeit als Fundament des Thrones," *VT*, VIII [1958], 426-28).

[3] Given demonic characterization as Apophis (cf. *ANET*, pp. 6f.).

[4] *ANET*, p. 372, footnote 9. Through the process of hypostatization, *Ma'at* acquired divine status, though she never seemed to achieve prominence in the Egyptian pantheon, and in fact, with the exception of the temple built for her in Karnak by Amen-hotep III, she remained in relative obscurity (Schmid, *Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit*, p. 20).

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> happen or dreams by night as well as day. He has slain the treacherous of heart among them, as a man beats his son for his brother's sake. For the god knows every name.[1]

Such a text amply illustrates the view of creation in wisdom literature and especially the beneficent nature of the spheres of world order. This optimistic view of creation and the order which permeated it made possible the beginnings of the sapiential literary production in Egypt, a literature that seeks to create, extend, and perpetuate order by means of the correct guidance of its adherents within the Kingdom of Ma'at.

Ma'at and the Gods. According to the sapiential understanding of the divine, the Urgott is not only the creator who established Ma'at as the constitutive order of the universe, but also is the one responsible for the maintenance and preservation of this order he initiated,[2] a task he accomplishes by means of the principle of retribution. According to this idea, a particular act or thought sets into motion a force which eventually will lead to a particular result; therefore, a wise/righteous act leads to a beneficial result, whereas a foolish/wicked action leads to the punishment and possibly even the destruction of the perpetrator, and, at times, even the social unit or units with which he is associated. Yet retribution is not a self-generative, self-perpetuating force, but rather it is regulated and overseen by the Urgott who blesses society and the individual for the maintenance and perpetuation of *Ma'at*, but punishes and even destroys the society or the individual which transgresses social and cosmological order.[1] Brunner has perceptibly remarked: "Jedes Abirren von dem Weg der Ordnung bestrafft Gott, und zwar in der Regel ohne ausdrücklich Willensakt, vielmehr muss der (Bewusst oder unbewusst) sich vergehende Mensch zwangsläufig anstossen."[2] Yet one should not conclude from this observation that the deity is totally bound to a system of *Vergeltung*, because the deity possesses divine freedom which allows him to act independently of any regulatory system,[3] a freedom leading to the observation: "One thing are the words which men say, another is that which the god does."[4] Even during the Old Kingdom the Egyptian

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[1] ll. 132ff.; ANET, p. 417.

[2] H. Bonnet, "Maat," RÄRG (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1952), 430-434.

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[1] H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, Harper Torchback (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940), p. 76 (see Meri-ka-Re, ll. 53f.; *ANET*, p. 415).

[2] "Die Weisheitsliteratur," *Ägyptologie*, HO, I (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1952), 94. Such a point is illustrated in Meri-ka-Re, ll. 49-50; *ANET*, p. 415.

[3] This is especially true in later wisdom (Ani 8, 3-10; Amen-em-Opet 22, 5-8; 23, 8-21; 24, 13-18; Papyrus Insinger 2, 14-20; 30, 23; 32, 18; and 'Onchsheshonqy 23, 12).

[4] Amen-em-Opet, xix, 16-17 (*ANET*, p. 423). De Buck states in reference to this passage: "Het is een thema, dat ons uit de Bijbelsche Chokma welbekend is, een prediking, dit tot de meest ken merkende trekken dezer chokma behoort: de geringheid en nietigheid van den mensch tegenover God, bij wien allen de wijsheid is en de macht, die over den mensch beschikt naar zijn welbehagen men kent zijn plannen, treft maatregelen, naar over de toekomst vermag hij niets; die is in Gods hand. ("Het Religieus Karakter der oudste egyptische Wijsheid," p. 328). For an excellent discussion of the freedom of God, see Hellmut Brunner, "Der freie Wille Gottes in der ägyptischen Weisheit," *SPOA*, 103-20.

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sage recognized that order was not immutable due to the deity's volition, and that the deity very well could be remote and quite inscrutable. Such an observation assumed tremendous proportions during periods of extreme societal and personal crisis when orientation to world order was impossible due to the loss of any tangible, easily perceived order. As we shall see, such a response of despair was most noticeable after the dissolution of the Old Kingdom during the First Intermediate Period.[1]

One of the most intriguing aspects of wisdom theology is the customary generic reference to the deity as "god" or "the god" (ntr), thus avoiding in general any overt participation in the extremely complex polytheism so characteristic of Egyptian religion. While a variety of reasons have been suggested to explain this phenomenon, the most plausible is that such generic references reflect the central concern of the wise with the Urgott who has created and continues to maintain world order, and who is revealed not in one specific cultus, but rather in all cults as well as the order for which he is responsible.[2]

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[1] See "The Prophecy of Nefer-rohu," (ANET, pp. 444-46); "The Admonitions of Ipu-wer," (ANET, pp. 441-444); "The Protests of the Eloquent Peasant," (ANET, pp. 407-41); and "A Dispute over Suicide," (ANET, pp. 405-7).

[2] So remarks Morenz: "Mit 'Gott' meinen die Weisheitslehren das durch Wirksamkeit gekennzeichnete Wesen, das mutatis mutandis dem Urgott entspricht " (op. cit., pp. 27-28). Some scholars have argued for monotheistic tendencies in Egyptian wisdom (Joseph Vergot, "La notion de dieu dans les livres de sagesse Égyptien," SPOA, 159-190; and Eberhard Otto, "Monotheistische Tendenzen in der ägyptischen Religion," WO, II/2 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1955], pp. 99-110).

Finally, the remoteness of the Urgott never seemed to negate the belief in that deity's personal concern for the individual man, a point well expressed in the above citation from Meri-ka-Re: "the god knows every name" and "is aware of him who acts for him."[1]

Ma'at and the State: the Pharaoh. With the establishment of world order in creation, the social expression of that order became the Egyptian body politic which was regarded as the microcosm of the created cosmos. In Egypt kingship was the state, and the purpose delegated to the king by the creator deity was to maintain the order established by the Urgott, the divine author of the political, social, and religious institutions.[2] This he was to do in the realms of justice, war, and cult, and the result of creating and maintaining order was the integration of the Egyptian state within the beneficent spheres of the cosmos which led, of course, to the well-being of Egyptian society.[3]

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[1] Meri-ka-Re , ll. 131f. (ANET, p. 417).

[2] Sigmund Mowinckel declares: "In the static view of life, kingship is an essential factor in the eternal world order and the basis of all ordered existence " (He That Cometh [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956], p. 28).

[3] See the superb study of H. H. Schmid, Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung, BHT, 40 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1968). The king's concern for Ma'at may be seen in a statement taken from the "Inscription of Vizier Kagemni": "Tut die Sache der Maat dem König denn das, was der König liebt, ist die Maat. Sagt die Sache der Maat dem König, denn das, was der König liebt, ist die Maat." (E. Edel, "Inschriften des Alten Reiches," MIO, I [1953], p. 213).

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Since there were no promulgated law-codes, the divine pharaoh himself was considered the incarnation of divine justice, a justice he was to administer because of his possession of the divine gifts of Hu, Sia, and Ma'at. The ideal wise king was to be concerned with justice, as may be seen from the instruction given to King Meri-ka-Re:

> Do Justice whilst thou endurest upon the earth. Quiet the weeper; do not oppress the widow; supplant no man in the property of his father; and impair no officials at their posts. Be on thy guard against punishing wrongfully. Do not slaughter: it is not of advantage to thee.[1]

Failure to adhere to the standards of Ma'at was considered the worst possible breach of divine responsibility, and was the chief cause of the dissolution of the stately embodiment of order, a point made strikingly vivid by the attack levelled against a pharaoh by Ipu-wer during the First Intermediate Period:

> Authority, Perception, and Justice[2] are with thee, (but) it is confusion which thou wouldst set throughout the land, together with the noise of contention. Behold, one thrusts against another. Men conform to that which thou hast commanded. . .[3]

As commander of the army and protector of the boundaries of Upper and Lower Egypt, the pharaoh was responsible for military conquest, considered to be the extension of the Kingdom of *Ma'at*, and the defense of Egyptian territory from the onslaughts of foreign invaders. King Amen-em-het boasts of his military prowess in his announcement:

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[1] Meri-ka-Re, ll. 47f. (ANET, p; 415).

[2] Hu, Sia, and Ma'at. Wilson comments: Hu, "authoritative utterance" or "creative command," and Sia, "intellectual perception" or "cognition," were a pair of related attributes, often deified. As attributes of kingship, they were sometimes linked to Ma'at, "justice" or "truth." Kingship thus needed the ability to comprehend a situation, the authority to meet the situation by command, and the balance of equitable justice." (ANET, p. 443, footnote 39).

[3] XII, 11f. (ANET, p. 443)

> Never has there been the like of my reputation as the doer of valiant deeds. I trod as far as Elephantine; I attained to the marshes of the Delta. I stood upon the margins of the land and saw its enclosure. I reached the limits of the armed territory, by my (own) strong arm and in my (own) form of being.
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> . . . .
>
> I overcame lions; I caught crocodiles. I subjugated them of Wawat; I carried off the Madjoi; I made the Asiatics do the dog-walk.[1]

In a candid, extremely atypical, confession of failure, Meri-ka-Re's "divine" father admitted that because of his inadequacy in defending the Thinite regions, he suffered the pains of retributive punishment for allowing the order of the kingdom to be disrupted:

> Behold, a misfortune happened in my time. The Thinite regions were hacked up. It really happened through what I had done, and I knew of it (only) after (it) was done. Behold, my recompense (came) out of what I had done.[2]

Being the principal guarantor and proponent of *Ma'at*, the king also was a central focus of wisdom instruction. Of all the adherents to the guidelines of *Ma'at*, he must be the one who follows unswervingly sagacious instructions in both his training and his reign, and, in turn, must transmit them to his successor. Extant royal instructions

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[1] ii, 7f. (*ANET*, p. 419)

[2] ll. 119f. (*ANET*, p. 417).

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include Ka-gem-ni, Meri-ka-Re, and Amen-em-het.[1] Throughout these sapiential writings, one finds the same concern for order expressed in instructions and observations that one finds in writings intended for the training of scribal and bureaucratic officials, though, of course, certain ones are applicable only to the unique position of the king. Yet he is given greater powers than ordinary mortals, for he incorporates the divine qualities of Hu (authoritative utterance), Sia (intellectual perception), and Ma'at (justice/truth), qualities which were to empower him to follow the rules of Ma'at and subsequently maintain societal order.

As stated earlier, the just king who maintained societal order produced for his people well-being and prosperity, most commonly expressed in the productivity of the natural world.[2] And, of course, failure by the king led to the disruption of order and consequently to the chaos of civil war and the upsetting of the natural cycle. Nefer-rohu lamented the horrid conditions of the kingdom of his time which was suffering from a misguided king:

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[1] Hor-dedef was a royal prince, though apparently not the crown prince (ANET, pp. 419-20).

[2] Amen-em-het boasts: "I was the one who made barley, the beloved of the grain god. The Nile honored me on every broad expanse. No one hungered in my years; no one thirsted therein " (ANET, p. 419). Frankfort explains this expression: "The king 'produced barley,' not merely in an indirect way, . . . but through his own actions--by maintaining Maat, the right order which allowed nature to function unimpaired for the benefit of man!" (Kingship and the Gods [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948], pp. 57-58).

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> THE RIVERS of Egypt are empty, (so that) the water is crossed on foot. Men seek water from the ships to sail on it. Its course is (become) a sandbank. The sandbank is against the flood; the place of water is against the (flood)-(both) the place of water and the sandbank.[1]

Ma'at and the State: the Men of the King. The creation and transmission of wisdom literature in ancient Egypt occurred within the cirlces of the scribal officials, who theoretically were conceived to be the functional extension of the pharaonic institution in which they found their raison d'être. In "The Installation of the Vizier," the statement is made: "As for him who shall do justice before all men, he is the vizier" (ll. 18-19).[2] The wise vizier was chiefly responsible for the maintenance of judicial justice, a responsibility delegated to him by the king. Additional areas of authority and duties filtered down throughout the ranks of the scribal hierarchy in the administration of the royal state. Through this vast scribal bureaucracy were channeled the powers and responsibilities of the royal institution. Through devoted service to the king come not only the continuation of the divine order of the state, but personal achievement and success. Ptah-hotep points to his own experiences of achievement as the validation of the merits of obedience to sagacious instruction:

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[1] ll. 27f. (ANET, p. 445). We have purposefully omitted the responsibility of the Pharaoh as concerns cult, since this will be part of our investigation later on. However, Schmid's comment should be underscored: "Die so zentrale Funktion des Maat-Begriffs in kultischen Zusammenhängen zeigt, dass der Ägypter den Kult (zumindest auch) als Teil der Bemühung um die umfassende Weltordnung verstanden hat " (Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung, p. 60).

[2] Faulkner, "The Installation of the Vizier," JEA, XL (1955), 22-23.

> An obedient son is a follower of Horus.[1] What I have done on earth is not inconsiderable. I attained one hundred and ten years of life which the king gave me, with favor foremost among the ancestors, through doing right for the king up to the point of veneration.[2]

Perhaps the height of scribal adulation and loyalty expressed for the king who is the incarnation of stately order, is expressed in "The Instruction of a Man for his Son," which has an obvious propagandist tendance:

> Do not turn away from the god,[3] (but) adore him, love him as (loyal) supporters. He will bless as his power shall grant; whom he neglects is one who has no prospects; worth more is he than millions of men, to him whom he has favored.[4]

Such undying devotion to the king in the Old Kingdom may have been partially the result of the dogma that eternal life was possible only for the pharaoh and that small entourage of courtiers and nobles upon whose devoted service the pharaoh grew to depend during his earthly existence.[1]

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[1] The ruling Pharaoh was regarded as the incarnation of the god Horus.

[2] ll. 640f. (ANET, p. 414). Eberhard Otto explains: "Der zentralistische Verwaltungsstaat bedarf auf seiner Aufrechterhaltung eines bestimmten Beamtentyps. Aus der Praxis und Erfahrung wird dieser Typ durch fachliche Ausbildung und charakterliche Bildung geformt. Er muss über ausgedehnte Kenntnisse der Verwaltungspraxis verfügen; er dient in seinem Amt nicht einem bestimmten Herrscher, sondern verwirklicht die Idee der Staats- und Weltordnung, deren Garant, nicht Schöpfer der jeweilige Pharao ist" ("Bildung und Ausbildung im alten Ägypten," ZÄS, LXXXI [1956], 47).

[3] The god is probably the king, a conclusion drawn by K. A. Kitchen who refers to a variant reading which is 'king' ("Studies in Egyptian Wisdom Literature," OrAnt, VIII (1969), 193, footnote 25).

[4] For an excellent discussion of this political instruction, see Hans Goedicke, "Die Lehre eines Mannes für seinen Sohn," ZÄS, XCIV (1967), pp. 62-71.

The high esteem in which the scribal profession was held is most noticeable in two wisdom documents: "In Praise of Learned Scribes"[2] and "The Instructions of Khety."[3] In exalting the scribal profession above all others, Khety presents sardonic glimpses into other less enticing professions. He tells his prospective scribe who is about to embark on his journey to the school for officials in the capital:

> BEHOLD, I HAVE SET THEE ON THE WAY of god. The Renenut of a scribe is on his shoulder on the day of his birth. He reaches the halls of the magistrates, when he has become a man. Behold there is no scribe who lacks food for the property of the House of the King--life, prosperity, health! Meskhenet is (the source of) the scribe's welfare, he being set before the magistrates. His father and his mother praise god, he being set upon the way of the living.[4]

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[1] John Wilson, The Burden of Egypt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 79. That such was the case could be seen in the position of the massabas of the nobility closely grouped around the pharaoh's pyramid. However, through a democratization process by the time of the New Kingdom even commoners could become Osiris and achieve the gift of eternal life. Also see an early Middle Kingdom text, "The Divine Attributes of Pharaoh," (ANET, p. 431): "Fight on behalf of his (pharaoh's) name, and be scrupulous in the oath to him, (that) ye may be free from a taint of disloyalty. He whom the king has loved will be a revered one, (but) there is no tomb for a rebel against his majesty, and his corpse is cast into the water."

[2] ANET, pp. 431-432.

[3] ANET, pp. 432-434.

[4] I, 2f. (ANET, p. 434).

Adulation bordering on worship was given to certain truly distinguished teachers in the wisdom schools, as is evidenced by the Papyrus Chester Beatty IV:

> As for those learned scribes from the time of those who lived after the gods, they could foretell what was to come, their names have become everlasting, (even though) they are gone, they completed their lives, and all their relatives are forgotten. THEY DID NOT MAKE FOR THEMSELVES pyramids of metal, with the tombstone thereof of iron. They were not able to have heirs in children . . . pronouncing their names, but they made heirs for themselves in the writings and in the (books of) wisdom which they composed . . . Their mortuary service is (*gone*); their tombstones are covered with dirt; and their graves are forgotten, (but) their names are (still) pronounced because of their books which they made, since they were good and the memory of him who made them (lasts) to the limits of eternity.[1]

The primary form of Egyptian wisdom literature was the "Instruction" (*sb3yt*) which consisted of "Admonitions" (*Mahnwort*) and "Sayings" (*Aussagewort*). Such a literary structure consists of the following parts:

1. Title--"The beginning of the Instruction which X has composed for his son Y.".
2. Prose Introduction--The setting forth of the details of why the instruction is given.
3. Contents--the linking together of admonitions and sayings

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[1] *ANET*, 431f. Brunner indicates that the four pairs of famous men who are mentioned are identifiable, with the exception of Ptah-em-Djehuti. Ka-iris is probably Ka-gem-ni, and Nofry is probably Nefer-rohu. All of these wise men (*rḫ-yḫt*) are said to have written "Instructions" and to have predicted the future. This is a puzzling statement, but Brunner explains that in Egypt both "prophecy" and rules of life are based upon an idea of order. In addition, Kha-kheper-(Re)-seneb wrote a lamentation, not any known "Instruction." Yet Brunner believes that the inclusion of lamentations along with prophecies and "Instructions" seems to be based on the fact that each of the three types of literature contained the *Spruch*(*ts*), and thus can be classified as *Spruchliteratur* ("Die 'Weisen,' ihre 'Lehren' und 'Prophezeiungen' in altägyptischer Sicht," *ZAS*, XCIII [1966], 29-35). We would add that it

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in contiguous sections.[1]

Such Instructions were created with the express purpose of training officials and scribes to observe the dictates of Ma'at, to function within their particular scribal and official capacities, and to achieve

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appears that the wise did write Lamentations, e.g. the one found in "The Dialogue of a Man Tired of Life with his Soul."

[1] Brunner defines the genre in the following way: "Mit 'Weisheitslehren' bezeichnen wir die Literaturgattung der Werke, die eine Unterweisung eines Lehrers an einen Schüler (oft als Form die eines Vater an seinen Sohn) oder die Fiktion einer solchen Belehrung enthalten. Der Lehrer leitet auf Grund überlieferter Erkenntniss seinen Schüler zu richtigen Verhalten im Leben an " ("Die Weisheitsliteratur," p. 90). Such literature comprised a major part of the literature of the school curriculum). Other literature included the Kemyt ("completion"--a collection of idioms and formulae completed in the eleventh dynasty), "Satire on the Trades," "Sinuhe," "Hymn to the Nile," and possibly Neferrohu and certain of the other loyalist teachings. During the New Kingdom, hymns to deities and kings and letters were also studied. Williams remarks: "The words of the ancestors furnished much of the material for instruction. Reading and writing were learned by copying them, and they provided the norms of correct speech. From them too the rules of court etiquette would be imparted as well as the principles of ethical conduct." ("Scribal Training in Ancient Egypt," JAOS, XCII [1972], 217). In addition to literature, the curriculum also included foreign languages, administrative concerns, lists, geography, mathematics, music, and sports (Otto, "Bildung und Ausbildung," p. 42). Otto also points out: "Eigentlich religiöser Schrifttum (Rituale, Kultvorschriften) findet sich in der Schulliteratur bemerkenswerter Weise nicht, wohl aber Hymnen und Anrufungen verschiedener Götter (auch des Königs) in allgemeinerer Form " (Ibid.). For a comprehensive treatment of education in ancient Egypt, see H. Brunner, Altägyptische Erziehung (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1957).

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success, fortune, and well-being.[1] Amen-em-Opet instructs his 'son':

> If thou spendest thy time while this is in thy heart,
> Thou wilt find it a success;
> Thou wilt find my words a treasury of life,
> And thy body will prosper upon earth.[2]

But not only did the wise conceive of themselves as "men of the King," but, in addition, they considered their roles to be the means by which the Urgott continued to maintain order in the Egyptian state. In fact, these sages considered their activities as actually creating Ma'at. Such an understanding becomes increasingly apparent in the wisdom instructions produced in the Middle and New Kingdoms, and can be seen, for example, in the constant references of Amen-em-Opet to "god" (or "the god") as the basis for any activity. In speaking of the sage's function as a judge in a law court, the sage is to be just and free from corruption, for his just decisions are the carrying out of the designs of god (XXI 1ff.). And the same is true of the sage who is to keep honest records (XXI 13ff.).

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[1] It should be stressed that wisdom's orientation is both religious and authoritative, for it finds its grounding in the cosmic order established by the creator. It is not simply 'good advice' in contradistinction, say, to law (Morenz, op. cit., p. 125). Rather, wisdom's authoritative call to men demands obedience, and if spurned, destruction will occur. The authority is based not only upon the divine order, but also upon the verification of wisdom teaching in the arenas of personal experience and the experiences of the fathers incorporated in sapiential tradition (Ptah-hotep, ll. 30f.; ANET, p. 412). Otto observes: "Es ist so dann der Begriff der Kontinuität hervorzuheben: Das vom Vater oder Lehrer Vertretene und Erbprobte soll der Lehrende annehmen; darin liest eine Guarantie für die ununterbrochene Weiterführung der Weltordnung " ("Bildung und Ausbildung," p. 44). Also see Brunner, Erziehung, pp. 130-131.

[2] iii, 17f. (ANET, p. 422).

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Ma'at and Mankind. Not only were the wise concerned with cosmological and societal spheres of order, but equally were concerned with the creating of Ma'at within the hearts of their students which would result in their being able to orient themselves within the beneficent orders of reality and to avoid the disaster caused by the aberration of that order. The seat of learning and the receptacle for the embodiment of sapiential instruction was thought to be the heart. Thus Amen-em-Opet begins his Instruction with the admonition:

> Give thy ears, hear what is said,
> Give thy heart to understand them.
> To put them in thy heart is worth while,
> (But) it is damaging to him who neglects them.
> Let them rest in the casket of thy belly,
> That they may be a key in thy heart.
> At a time when there is a whirlwind of words,
> They shall be a mooring-stake for thy tongue.
> If thou spendest time while this is in thy heart,
> Thou wilt find my words a treasury of life,
> And thy body will prosper upon earth.[1]

On the contrary, a fool is one whose heart does not receive instruction. While divine determination of one's ability or inability to receive instruction at times is denied, certain students' inability to follow wisdom's path led to the occasional conclusion that the deity must have created them to be forever ignorant: "He whom the god loves is a hearkener, (but) he whom god hates cannot hear."[2]

It is especially true in Egypt that the Instructions are to be seen as incorporating a Standesethik which set forth the important

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[1] iii, 9f. (ANET, p. 421).

[2] l. 545 (ANET, p. 414). See H. Brunner, "Das hörende Herz," TLZ, LXXIX (1954), 697-700.

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criteria prerequisite to a successful career in the service to the king.[1] Each admonition and observation, whether concerned with social ethics or dining etiquette, contributed to the same purpose--the providing of guidance for young students in the dictates of Ma'at. Thus in the dichotomy drawn between the "Heated Man" and the "Silent Man," the "Silent Man" is the ideal wise professional who because of his training is considered to have complete mastery over his passions, especially his tongue, and is able to practice the moderation of self-control. While, by way of contrast, the "Heated Man" is the untrained, illiterate, unskilled, foolish intemperate who, being dominated by his passions which are allowed to run to full course, has no regard for order and consequently is brought to self-destruction.[2]

The active principle which operates within the spheres of Ma'at in order to assure reward for the wise-righteous and punishment for the foolish wicked is Tat-Ergehen-Zusammenhang, or retribution, the idea that there is a causative connection between one's behavior and the results of that behavior. However, it should be stressed that the Egyptian wise recognized the limitations of the human ability to perceive and follow the guidelines of Ma'at, and, as a result, incongruities which arose were never blamed on the deity's capricious disruption of order, but rather were attributed to the lack of complete understanding and the inability to adapt perfectly one's behavior to the dictates of order. Furthermore, the deity was recognized to possess freedom of will, and, therefore, was never completely bound to the principle of retribution.

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[1] See Brian Kovacs, "Is There A Class Ethic in Proverbs"? Essays in Old Testament Ethics (New York: Ktav, 1974), pp. 171-190.

[2] For the contrast between the "Heated Man" and the Silent Man," see Amen-em-Opet vi, 14, xi, 14f., xiii, 10f.; Ani iv, 1f.; and "A Prayer to Thoth " (ANET, p. 379).

B. Views of Cult in Egyptian Wisdom Literature

Having surveyed the basic tenets of the *Weltanschauung* of the Egyptian wise with its central orientation to *Ma'at*, we must now consider whether or not cult had any role to play within the world-view of the wise in Egypt. Was cult of little or no concern to the sages, or did it receive a penetrating assessment and subsequently an important place in sapiential concerns? Certainly Fichtner's opinion is dubious: "Wie die ältere isr.-jüd. so nimmt auch die ägyptische Wshtslit. vielfach keine Notiz vom Kult." Yet Fichtner does admit that exceptions to this lack of concern for cult may be found in Meri-ka-Re, Ani, Amem-em-Opet, and the Papyrus Insinger.[1] As mentioned in Chapter I, many scholars have argued that the realm of wisdom is the secular, profane sphere of everyday existence, and, therefore, cult and cultic duties are of very little concern to the wise. Such a generalization would be astounding if correct, but as we shall hope to prove from the following investigation, cult did receive significant attention from the sages in their attempts to assess the compartments

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[1] *Die altorientalische Weisheit*, p. 36. Zandee's statement is only slightly more positive: "Over cultische plichten wordt slechts zelden gesproken " ("Egyptische Levenswijsheid," *Phoenix*, X (1964),

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of world order.

The Old Kingdom

The Instruction for Ka-gem-ni.[1] In probably the oldest extant Instruction, "The Instruction for Ka-gem-ni," we have an Instruction dating from perhaps the third or fourth dynasty, but, unfortunately the text is corrupt.[2] From the historical introduction, an anonymous vizier apparently has become old in his service to Pharaoh Huni, and, therefore, begins to set forth rules of life for his children, especially Ka-gem-ni who is designated to be his successor as vizier under the next pharaoh, Snefru. None of the fragmentary admonitions contains any references to cult, though it would be a hasty conclusion to draw from this omission the conclusion that the wise were unconcerned with cult, since the text is fragmentary, and the entire piece extremely brief.

The Instruction of Prince Hor-dedef. Another Instruction from the Old Kingdom is that of Prince Hor-dedef, certainly one of the most revered Egyptian sages of antiquity, who was a son of

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[1] An English translation has been made by A. H. Gardiner, "The Instruction Addressed to Kagemni and his Brethren," JEA, XXXII (1946), 71-74.

[2] In addition to Gardiner's translation and study, one should consult Walter Federn, "Notes on the Instruction to Kagemni and his Brethren," JEA, XXXVI (1950), 48-50; A. H. Gardiner, "Kagemni Once Again," JEA, XXXVII (1951), 109-10; Elmar Edel, "Inscriften des Alten Reiches. II. Die Biographie des k3j-gjnj (Kagemni)," MIO, I (1953), 210-226; and especially, Alexander Scharff, "Die Lehre für Kagemni," ZÄS, LXXVII (1941), 13-21.

Khufu, though apparently not the crown prince.[1] His instruction which also is truncated and fragmentary has preserved material which concerns the making of proper mortuary preparations which will insure one of participation in the future life.[2] These preparations include the importance of taking a wife and producing a son, with the obvious concern being that one may in this way make sure that the proper mortuary rituals will be carried through. The other preparations involve the building and embellishing of one's tomb, for the sage states that those who have made such preparations will continue to exist in the life after death.[3] Such material gives us an initial insight into the attitude of the wise with respect to mortuary religion, and demonstrates that the wise shared the cultic ideology of the priests especially in the concern for continuation into the future life by means of mortuary religion.[1]

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[1] For a recent translation, see ANET, pp. 419-20. Scholarly examinations of the instruction include: Georges Posener, "Le dèbut de l'enseignement de Hardjedef," RdÉ, IX (1952), 109-17; Emma Brunner-Traut, "Die Weisheitslehre des Djedef-Hor," ZÄS, LXXVI (1940), 3-9; Helmut Brunner, "Ein weiteres Djedefhor-Zitat," MDAIK, XIX (1963), 53; and Hans Goedicke, "Ein Verehrer des Weisen DDFHR aus dem späten Alten Reich," ASAÉ, XLV (1958), 35-55. The fame of Hor-Dedef is seen in the numerous references to him and his instruction in later literature (cf. "In Praise of Learned Scribes," ANET, p. 432; and "The Song of the Harper," ANET, p. 467). Goedicke also points to evidence for a cult of Ddfḥr by the First Intermediate Period (op. cit.).

[2] Brunner-Traut, op. cit., p. 5. Ironically, according to the Intef Song and "In Praise of Learned Scribes," Hor-dedef's hopes for immortality by means of mortuary religion were dashed by the destruction of his tomb.

[3] Thus Posener observes: "L'auteur montre . . . le désarroi de l'homme devant l'antinomie entre la vie et la mort et rappelle que la tomb assure l'immortalitié. La garantie matérielle de la survie est celle de l'époque où vit Hardjedef; le point nouveau et intéressant est que le problème de la vie et de la mort se pose de son temps, et trouble déja les esprits. A la Premiere Période Intermediaire, l'écralement des monuments funéraires ancien montre la fragilité du credo de l'Ancien Empire . . ." (op. cit., p. 115). This concern for proper burial including a tomb and mortuary service

The Instruction of Ptah-hotep.[2] One of the most famous instructions of the Old Kingdom is that of Ptah-hotep, the vizier of Pharaoh Izezi of the fifth dynasty, written during the height

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is illustrated in "The Story of Si-nuhe" (ANET, pp. 18-22; ll. 190-200). Si-nuhe was a courtier who fled Egypt at the death of Amen-em-het I, perhaps because of his fear of being implicated in some palace intrigue. After becoming quite successful in Asia, the successor, Sen-Usert I (1971-1928 B.C.), writes to Si-nuhe urging him to return to Egypt: "Recall thou the day of burial, the passing to a revered state, when the evening is set aside for thee with ointments and wrappings from the hands of Tait. A funeral procession is made for thee on the day of interment, a mummy case of gold, with head of lapis lazuli, with the heaven above thee, as thou are placed upon a sledge, oxen dragging thee and singers in front of thee, when the dance of the muu is performed at the door of thy tomb, when the requirements of the offering table are summoned for thee and there is sacrifice beside thy offering stones, thy pillars being hewn of white stone in the midst of (the tombs of) the royal children. It should not be that thou shouldst die in a foreign country. Asiatics should not escort thee. Thou shouldst not be placed in a sheepskin when thy wall is made. This is (too) long to be roaming the earth. Give heed to sickness, that thou mayest return." Also see ll. 300-310 where Si-nuhe, having returned to Egypt, tells of his tomb being constructed, his mortuary priests, his necropolis garden, and his statue overladen with gold. He boasts that "there is no poor man for whom the like has been done."

[1] For an excellent survey of the major emphases in mortuary religion, see Morenz, Ägyptische Religion, pp. 192f.

[2] For an English translation, see ANET, pp. 412-14. Among recent scholarly studies dealing with this instruction, see A. Dobrovits, "Sur la structure stylistique de l'Enseignement de Ptahhotep," AcAnt, XVI (1968), 21-37; and Gerhard Fecht, Der Habgierige und die Maat in der Lehre des Ptahhotep, MDAIK, I (Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1958).

of Egyptian culture and optimistic well-being. According to this sage, well-being and success come to the wise man who is faithfully devoted in his service to the divine king. Firm is this wise man's faith in the doctrine of Ma'at which provides the basis for orderly existence and professional success. As Spiegel states concerning the central concern of Ptah-hotep: "Harmonische Einfügung in diese allumfassend gottegewollte Ordnung ist die vornehmste Pflicht des Menschen."[1] While we can search in vain for explicit admonitions or observations referring to cult, it becomes obvious that Ptah-hotep, like Hor-dedef, also avows the cultic dogma of a future life obtainable by the scribe faithful in his service to the divine pharaoh, and, related to this, by one who has a tomb prepared. The latter point may be seen in the 19th maxim, ll. 298f.:

> Dagegen dauert der Mann, dessen Lebensprinzip die Gerechtigkeit ist, und der den ihm vorgezeichneten Weg geht. Er macht ein Vermögen dabei, aber der Gierige bleibe ohne Grab![2]

This interesting passage demonstrates that it is one's righteousness, defined in terms of one's adherence to the dictates of Ma'at, that assures one of a participation in the future life, whereas the "passionate man" who neither stands in conformity to Ma'at nor faithfully serves the king is granted the gift of a grave, and, therefore, is denied participation in the continuance of a life following death.[1] Furthermore a number of statements demonstrate that the sage who is devoted to the divine pharaoh also, as a result of that service, will be granted a place in the entourage of the king in his future life: "Mayest thou reach me, with thy body sound, and with the king satisfied with all that has taken place."[2]

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[1] Das Werden der Altägyptischen Hochkultur (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1953), p. 464.

[2] Ibid, p. 460.

The royal cult centered around the kings is not expressly discussed in Ptah-hotep, though the vizier certainly shared the ideology of the divine pharaoh, since he refers to the king as 'god' (ll. 38f., 199, 339). Furthermore he instructs his 'son' to be a "follower of Horus," reflecting the Osiris-Horus ritual in Egypt (l. 593).[3]

In conclusion, it seems apparent the wise of the Old Kingdom shared the dogma of participation in the future life by means of

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[1] Fecht, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

[2] l. 639; ANET, p. 414. Also see ll. 32, 199, 229, 393, 545, and 588.

[3] For discussions of the dogma of the divine king, see Ivan Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), pp. 4-15; H. Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods, pp. 15-214; and H. W. Fairman, "The Kingship Rituals of Egypt," Myth, Ritual, and Kingship (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 74-104; and Morenz, Egyptian Religion, pp. 33f., 85. With respect to the cultic worship of the Pharaoh, there is no doubt that the dead kings were the recipients of cultic worship like other Egyptian deities, though there is some dispute as to whether or not kings were worshipped while still alive (S. A. B. Mercer, The Religion of Ancient Egypt [London: Luzac and Co., 1949], pp. 253f.).

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mortuary religion, conformity to Ma'at, and service to the divine king.

The First Intermediate Period

Introduction.[1] The optimism and placidity which characterized the sapiential literature of the Old Kingdom is changed to despair, pessimism, and at times outrage and a demand for the return of Ma'at, a change brought about by the dissolution of the Kingdom of Ma'at in terms of civil wars, invasions, and natural disasters. Such led the savants of ancient Egypt to question the very foundations of their ideological structure. In general, one can see two very different responses to the crisis in the sapiential ranks--the response of biting criticism, cynicism with respect to traditional dogmas (especially mortuary religion and the cult of the divine pharaoh) and even black despair; and the 'political response,' intended to bring about by political action and sapiential propaganda a re-establishing of order and a return to the traditional beliefs of old wisdom.

The Attack against Mortuary Religion: The Dialogue of a Man Tired of Life with his Ba.[2] By far the most devastating critique of the belief so prominent in sapiential literature in the Old Kingdom concerning an orderly transition to the future life by means of the mortuary cult[1] is the Streitgespräch between a wise man and his Ba, a debate which provides us not only with one of the most vivid depictions of agonizing despair in Egyptian Wisdom literature,[2] but also destroys the firm belief in the effectiveness of mortuary religion in being able to guarantee one's continuation into the future realm.[3]

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[1] For a survey of this historical period, see Sir Alan Gardiner, Egypt of the Pharaohs (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 67 ff.

[2] The text has been translated into English in ANET, pp. 405-7. This piece of Egyptian wisdom literature has elicited more response than any other piece with the exception of Amen-em-Opet. R. J. Williams has provided a brief overview of the studies which were written

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before 1962 ("Reflections on the Lebensmüde," JEA, XLVIII [1962], 49-56). Among the more important studies which should be consulted are Emma Brunner-Traut, "Der Lebensmüde und sein Ba," ZÄS, LXXVII (1944), 18-29; Alfred Hermann, "Das Gespräch eines Lebensmüden mit seiner Seele," OLZ, XXXIV (1939), 345-51; "Review of Siegfried Herrmann, Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgestalt Mittelägyptischer Literaturwerke," OLZ, LIV (1959), 251-53; Siegfried Herrmann, Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgestalt Mittelägyptischer Literaturwerke, DAWBIO, XXXIII (Berlin: Akademieverlag, 1957); Günter Lanczkowski, "Der 'Lebensmüde' als antiosirianische Schrift," ZRGG, VI (1954), 1-18; Émile Suys, "Le dialogue du désespéré avec son âme," Or, I (1932), 57-74; Gertrud Thausing, "Betrachtungen zum Lebensmüden," MDAIK, XV (1957), 262-67; Raymond Weill, "Le Livre du 'Désespéré', "BIFAO, XLV (1947), 89-154; R. O. Faulkner, "The Man who was Tired of Life," JEA, XLII (1956), 21-40; Jean S. F. Garnot, "La vie et mort d'après un texte égyptien de la haute époque," RHR, CXXVII (1944), 18-29; and Hans Goedicke, The Report about the Dispute of a Man with his Ba (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970).

[1] See Morenz, Egyptian Religion (London: Methuen and Co. 1973), pp. 183f.

[2] A. Hermann correctly classifies the piece as wisdom literature ("Review of Siegfried Herrmann," p. 262). The most obvious sapiential elements include the form of the Streitgespräch, the Ba's assuming the role of a wisdom teacher when he admonishes the man to heed his instruction, the Ba's admonition and two parables (ll. 66f.), the theme of the loss of world order, and the position of the man as a 'wise man' (rḫ jḫ.t).

[3] Such is in striking contrast to Hor-dedef's positive admonitions concerning the mortuary cult.

As Alfred Hermann and Raymond Weill have correctly perceived, the primary concern of the dialogue is neither the issue of suicide[1] nor the correct attitude towards meaningless existence--escape through self-immolation or hedonism, but rather at the heart of the dialogue is the presentation of two contrasting views of death and the future life.[2] Part of the orthodox view of death and the future life developing during the Old Kingdom is represented by the man. Such a dogma involved three, never completely integrated, facets. The most important of these was the one which received expression in the development of the mortuary cult which included magical incantations (Pyramid Texts), a well constructed tomb, mummification, proper provisions for sustenance in the afterlife, mortuary priests, and heirs who would faithfully see that the deceased received his proper burial and continued to receive the sustaining rituals and provisions. During the period of the Old Kingdom, such a future life was possible only for a very few--the divine pharaoh, his royal family and entourage, and a few needed servants. A second concept of the future life developed around the Ba, "the personification of the vital forces, physical as well as psychic, of the deceased, his alter ego, one of the modes of existence in which he continues to live after death."[1] Along with the mummy in the tomb, the Ba was seen as another mode of existence after death, though it seems to have had considerably more freedom, being able to leave the tomb at various times, only to return to the mummified body. Such a mode of existence, however, was not believed to be present until death. A third idea of life after death involved the belief that at death man continued to exist as an Akh, a 'transfigured spirit,' which became part of the cosmic order, though it had no human contact.[2] Now the disruption of the tranquility of the Old Kingdom brought about by the chaos experienced during the First Intermediate Period led to the creation of new, and at times radically opposite views concerning death and the future life. One new view (represented by the Ba) considered the mortuary cult and its expensive, elaborate trappings quite inadequate, and therefore, superfluous; an empirically developed view, resulting from the obvious observation that many tombs were destroyed and neglected during those times.[3] A second view, seen in the "Song of the Harper," remains completely agnostic with respect to any certainty of a future life. Finally, a new anthropological perspective began to make some headway during this period as can be derived from the coffin texts of the Heracleopolitan period in which the Ba was perceived to be a part of a man before death.[1] Such a view raised the vital question as to what would happen to a man if his Ba, considered to be the incorporation of his vital forces and efficacious qualities as well as essential for future existence, should separate from him before death.[2]

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[1] Hermann, "Das Gespräch," p. 348; and Weill, op. cit., 114. Thausing writes: "Der Konflikt liegt in dem erwachenden Rationalismus und einem religiösen Zweifel an den Grundfesten ägyptischen Glaubens, in einem Zweck an der Magie der Bestattung und der Weiterexistenz im Jenseits " (op. cit., p. 264).

[2] Lanczkowski, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

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[1] Louis Žabkar, "Ba," Lexikon der Ägyptologie, I (1973), 588-98.

[2] Cf. Frankfort's discussion of these views in Ancient Egyptian Religion, pp. 88f.

[3] See "A Song of the Harper," ANET, 467.

The first two facets of the orthodox dogma concerning death and the future life are to be seen in the position of the man, though he is troubled by the new concept concerning the Ba that was beginning to appear in certain cultic circles. The man is presented as a sage who has lost any semblance of meaningful existence due to the lack of a perceivable world order, and to his own personal loss of wealth, prestige, honor, and health, values common in the wisdom literature of the Old Kingdom.[3] Such a catastrophic situation led him to begin to consider making preparations for an orderly transition to the future life. And though the serenity of death and the bliss of a longed for future life beckon to him, he has recognized that he is ill-prepared for an orderly transition, since he has neither a tomb nor an heir needed to insure that he would receive the proper burial. In addition, due to his misfortune, he begins to contemplate the distressing possibility that he is being abandoned by his Ba, and,

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[1] Williams, op. cit., p. 52.

[2] Brunner-Traut, op. cit., p. 7.

[3] Cf. the discussion above.

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if true, his hope for an escape from a tormented present through death to a future life would be crushed.[1] By way of contrast, the Ba is presented as the sapiential cynic who despises the man because of his misfortune and is ready to abandon him. In addition he represents the newly developing idea that mortuary religion is an ineffectual facade for rotting bodies, though it remains inconclusive as to whether or not he equally denies a future existence by means of the Ba. With this background in mind, let us consider the dialogue.

The opening section of the dialogue is missing, and, unfortunately, complicates our understanding of the dialogue. It may be suggested, however, that the setting appears to be that of a sacrificial scene in which the wise man, his spirit crushed by his current dilemma, has started to initiate the ritual preparations for his imminent demise by offering up a mortuary sacrifice and by appealing to the divine tribunal which will soon face him in judgement.[2] Though the Ba's opening speech is missing, it appears from the first speech of the wise man that the Ba has threatened to abandon him because of his current misfortune, and in cruel derision has suggested that the man offer himself as a burnt offering to Re, a rather blasphemous idea completely repugnant to the man, for he believes the preservation of the body is essential for his

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[1] Brunner-Traut, op. cit.

[2] Williams, op. cit., p. 52.

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future life, but an idea rather pleasant for the Ba who would subsequently be free of the destitute man once and for all.[1] The man longs for death as an escape, but not premature death, certainly not suicide, since he has not made the proper mortuary preparations. The retort of the Ba to this speech is curt and mockingly cynical. He lampoons the impoverished and dishonored wise man for foolishly concerning himself with an impossible dream of a tomb, as though he were rich and able to afford such expensive preparations.

The wise man, stung by such a biting criticism, implores his Ba not to abandon him before his death, for such would destroy all hopes for a future existence. He tries to tempt the Ba into remaining with him by indicating that if the Ba will have patience, he will eventually be able to complete the necessary arrangements and will provide the Ba with a pleasing tomb for the future life that they can share together. However, if the Ba is successful in his urging[2] him on to self-immolation, then neither of them can hope for any future life.[3] The Ba responds by pointing to the eventual ineffectiveness of mortuary religion. Even the powerful and rich, the Pharaohs, who had the large pyramids built as their tombs are in the final analysis no better off than those who lie dead on the dyke and decompose in the water and the natural elements without the benefit of a proper burial, for their tombs have been destroyed and their mortuary services have been discontinued. As a consequence, he admonishes the man to heed a sapiential admonition that he cease to worry about mortuary concerns and "pursue the happy day and forget care"! This life affirming admonition is illustrated by the Ba with two parables. The first involves a fisherman who loses a young daughter in a crocodile infested lake. And he is presented as weeping not for her, but rather for her unborn children who have not seen the joys of living, the only true value accorded to man.[1] The second parable depicts a foolish peasant whose afternoon appetite remains unsatiated after his wife's wise counsel that for the poor there is food only for supper. Instead of accepting her advice, he foolishly loses his temper and goes away to sulk, thus loosing any chance for an inner tranquility.[2] These parables, coupled with the admonition, stress that the destitute wise man should accept his current situation, put away foolish concerns about ineffective mortuary preparations, and, like a true wiseman, come to an inner peace which will allow him to enjoy his present life.

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[1] S. Herrmann has argued that the Ba would not be destroyed by the fire, and as proof he refers to a coffin text translated by Otto, "Die beiden vogelgestaltigen Seelenvorstellungen der Ägypter," _ŽAS_, LXXVII (1941), 80: "Ich habe meinen Ba nach mir geschaffen, um ihn wissen zu lassen, was ich wusste. Er soll nicht verbrennen mit meiner Leiche. Er soll nicht von der Türhütern des Osiris aufgehalten werden."

[2] Translating _ihm_ "to urge," "to incite" (Weill, _op. cit._, p. 120), rather than "delayest" (John Wilson, _ANET_, p. 405).

[3] See the views of Hor-dedef and Ptah-hotep discussed above.

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[1] Weill, op. cit., p. 133.

[2] Ibid.

The man, ignoring the advice of his Ba, clings to his mortuary faith and offers up a lament, beautifully constructed in four strophes strung together by four recurring refrains in which he bemoans his own despicable situation and the lack of order in the world. In the first strophe, he condemns the faithless soul whose abandonment will mean that his name, that is his honor and memory, will become a repugnant odor. In the second strophe, he turns to ponder the loss of world order which is evident in the total disruption of current existence and to bemoan his own loss of position which has left him alone and deserted in a world whose unrighteous people have no desire to listen to the counsel of a destitute wise man. In the third strophe, he longs for the serenity of death which beckons to him as an entrancing odor of myrrh and lotus blossoms, and, finally in the fourth strophe, he looks to the blissful future life in which he will exist as a god in a realm where security, order, and cultic observance are present.

The conclusion is perplexing,[1] but it appears that the Ba continues to admonish the man to put aside thoughts of death and live, though he agrees to remain with the man whether he lives or dies, a concession that, at least to the man's thinking, will allow him a means of existence in the future life.[1] His fear that the Ba would abandon him before death is put to rest.

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[1] The following views are representative of the major ones offered by scholars concerning the conclusion: Williams concludes the Ba is urging the man to suicide, since a speedy death will allow the two of them to quickly enter the future life in the mode of the Ba (op. cit., p. 56); Wilson believes the soul is won over to the man's position of suicide and is willing to share the man's fate (ANET, p. 407, footnote 27); A. Hermann accepts the position that the man's traditional view of the future life finally convinces the Ba ("Das Gespräch," p. 351); and most intriguing is the conclusion of Weill who argues that the Ba's extreme position is modified by a vacillation which allows the possibility that he may be wrong in completely denying a future existence, a vacillation which would avoid offending the pious orthodox (op. cit., pp. 137-38).

What is most significant for our investigation, of course, is the complete repudiation by the Ba, and perhaps this is the position of the wise man who wrote the Dialogue, of the efficacy and, therefore, the necessity of mortuary religion. As the position of the Ba has effectively demonstrated, even if the ritual were necessary for a future life, the few wealthy who could afford the trappings of the elaborately expensive funerary cult could find small solace in the fact that during this period tombs were neglected and even despoiled. Thus it appears that during periods of tranquility such as that which characterized the Old Kingdom, the wise gave expression to their acceptance of the importance of mortuary religion (Hor-dedef, Ptah-hotep). However, with the onslaught of disruptive social, historical, and economic forces so strong during the First Intermediate Period, the wise despaired of the effectiveness of mortuary religion, and thus, some even reached the conclusion that it should be

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[1] Thausing argues that the Ba's position is one of complete denial of any type of future life (op. cit., p. 267), while Williams argues that the Ba believes in the existence of a future life by means of the Ba, but not by means of mortuary religion (op. cit.).

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totally abandoned as worthless. If there is a future life, and the Ba certainly never clearly commits himself to this belief, it results from the nature of man. It is through the Ba that all men can share in the future life, and not only the wealthy few who were ranked high enough in social and economic categories to be able to afford the mortuary cult. The Ba's position, however, places primary emphasis upon the achievement of inner tranquility and joy in this life, and a refusal to allow undue duress caused by thoughts of death to disturb one's quest for inner peace and joy.

A Harper's Song. Embedded among Egyptian literature is a genre of songs commonly referred to as "Harper Songs," so named because they often accompany tomb reliefs which depict a harper entertaining guests who are participating in a feast.[1] Egyptologists tend to regard the songs in two conflicting ways: either as songs which have their life situation within mortuary religion, and are, therefore, pious in spirit and positive in regards to death, for they joyously assure the deceased that his mortuary preparations are completed and, consequently, his future life is guaranteed; or as secular songs having their life situation in secular banquets, and, therefore, are skeptical in spirit and thoroughly pessimistic with respect to death and the future life.[1] Though there exists a number of such songs, the one that has received the most attention is the one found in the Papyrus Harris 500 manuscript which dates from the 19th dynasty, during the reign of Ramses II, and which is assumed to have come originally from the tomb of one of the Intef Kings, though whether it is to be dated before or after the twelfth dynasty is not certain.[2] The importance for our investigation rests on the conclusion that the song may be included within the skeptical wisdom tradition which appears at the end of the Old Kingdom,[3] though a certain king of the house of Intef had a regular funerary introduction added when the song was apparently placed within his tomb.[1]

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[1] For an English translation, see ANET, 467. Such a relief is on the north wall of a passage leading from the tomb's outer hall into the inner shrine of the tomb of Nefer-hotep. The relief pictures the priest, wife, and a squating harper near a table laden with food. Below this scene was the engraved song (see Miriam Lichtheim, "The Song of the Harper," JNES, IV [1945], p. 178).

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[1] Lichtheim, op. cit., pp. 178f., regards most of the Harper Songs which she examined to be derived from and intended for the mortuary cult, while Edward Wente, in a study of Harper Songs done after Ms. Lichtheim's article, and after new Harper materials had come to light, argues that the songs were secular, i.e., used at secular banquets ("Egyptian 'Make Merry' Songs Reconsidered," JNES, XXI [1962], 118-128).

[2] J. A. Wilson, "A Song of the Harper," ANET, p. 467.

[3] Lichtheim, op. cit., pp. 200-201. She argues that the one found in Papyrus Harris 500 is different from the others she examined both in tone and spirit, and therefore, concluded that the origin is best to be seen as that of the skeptical wisdom tradition being formulated at this time. We would agree with her classification for the following reasons: the incorporation of various sapiential admonitions which are given validity by the addition of motivation clauses; the same skeptical attitude toward mortuary religion found in the "Man who was Tired of Life"; references to the two great sages of the Old Kingdom (Imhotep and Hor-dedef) coupled with what appears to be a direct repudiation of their admonitions to participate in mortuary religion, though this is only a guess with respect to Imhotep, since his Instruction has not been discovered; and finally the sapiential structure of the song. The refrain around which the structure is developed is an admonition followed by two sayings. The admonition sums up the content of the second strophe, while the two sayings provide the the thesis for the first strophe. Cf. our chapter on Israelite Wisdom Psalms.

In contrast to most of the Harper Songs, this song is addressed to the living and not to a deceased king, and betrays a total skepticism toward any affirmations made about a future life in the first strophe, and in the second turns to a positive admonition that the living should "make holiday, and weary not therein!", an admonition followed by two sayings: "Behold, it is not given to a man to take his property with him", and "Behold, there is not one who departs (dies) who comes back again!" Most significant for our investigation into the attitudes of the wise with respect to cult is the reference to the two legendary savants of Egypt's past: Imhotep and Hor-dedef, and what may be assumed to be a satirical repudiation of their positive admonitions to their followers to take seriously mortuary religion:

> I have heard the words of Ii-em-hotep and Hor-dedef,
> With whose discourses men speak so much.
> What are their places (now)?
> Their walls are broken apart, and their places are
> not--As though they have never been!

In a vein similar to the strikingly grim observations of the "Ba" in the "Dialogue of a Man Tired of Life", the Harper has perceived that the hope for a future life based on one's preservation in a tomb and a continuation of mortuary rituals has been decimated by the chaotic conditions of the First Intermediate Period. Instead of speculating on the state of the dead, the iconoclastic harper remarks concerning death:

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[1] Lichtheim, op. cit., p. 200.

> There is none who comes back from (over) there,
> That he may tell their state,
> That he may tell their needs,
> That he may still our hearts,
> Until, we (too) may travel to the place where they have gone.

Like the Hebrew sage Koheleth, he avoids speculating on the subject of death and any possible future life, and advises his audience to "follow thy desire, as long as thou shalt live,...until there comes for thee that day of mourning."[1]

This text adds to the contention that the historical and personal crises which resulted from this traumatic age led to a bitter sarcasm with respect to the mortuary cult.

The Attack Against the Divine King: The Admonitions of Ipu-wer.[2] During the chaotic upheavals of the First Intermediate Period, another sage[3] responded to the disruption of political, social, and religious order by levelling the most bitter denunciation against a pharaoh in Egyptian wisdom literature.[1] Deprecating his earlier silence in the court before conditions had deteriorated so precipitously,[2] this sage describes in a strikingly vivid depiction the breakdown of Egyptian society until disorder and corruption had literally become the 'order of the day,' a reality so painfully depressing that suicide seemed for many a better alternative to living.[3]

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[1] Koh. 3:21-22.

[2] English translations include: ANET, pp. 441-46; A. H. Gardiner, The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1909); and R. O. Faulkner, "The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage," JEA, LI (1965), 53-62. Among the better scholarly literature, one should consult: R. O. Faulkner, "Notes on 'the Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage,'" JEA, L (1964), 24-36; Siegfried Herrmann, "Prophetie in Israel und Ägypten Recht und Grenze eines Vergleichs," SVT, IX (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 47-65; Eberhard Otto, "Weltanschauliche und Politische Tendenzschriften," 111-119; John van Seters, "A Date for the 'Admonitions' in the Second Intermediate Period," JEA, L (1964), 13-23; and Siegfried Herrmann, Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgestalt Mittelägyptischer Literaturwerke, 8-36.

[3] The literary genre of this piece has been assessed as prophecy

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(Wilson, *ANET*, p. 441), wisdom (Gardiner, *op. cit.*); and *Auseinandersetzungliteratur* (Otto, *Der Vorwurf an Gott* [Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1951]), which incorporates a *Streitgespräch* of men with the god who has allowed his creation to be disrupted. S. Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 60, points out that this piece is not an 'inspired' text of a so-called charismatic prophet who speaks for god (as with the literature of the Hebrew prophets), and in fact is much closer to wisdom literature than sacral literature. However, it is not just a collection of admonitions: "Vielmehr muss der neue Charakter dieser Literatur verstanden werden aus der geschichtlichen bewegten Umbruchsperiode, wie sie nach dem Ende des Alten Reichs die erste Zwischenzeit unter Einschluss der Herakleopolitenzeit darstellte. Das Aufbrechen neuer Erfahrungen und Horizonte brachte auch neue und universale Formen hervor. Diesem so entwickelten neuen Stil, der aus dem Gegenüber von alter Ordnung und neuer Erfahrungen erwuchs, der sich in den Werken selbst bis zum Dialog steigerte, suchte E. Otto sachlich richtig, wenn auch terminologisch nicht unbedingt schön, in der Wortverbindung 'Auseinandersetzungliteratur' gerecht zu werden." Of course, such literature can be found in the critical wisdom literature in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Israel.

[1] Scholarly consensus dates the "Admonitions" in the First Intermediate Period. However, for a recent attempt to place the piece within the Second Intermediate Period, see John van Seters, *op. cit.*

[2] "Ah, would that I had raised my voice at that time--it might save me from the suffering in which I am " (VI, 5f.).

[3] "WHY REALLY, crocidiles (*sink*) *down because of* what they have carried off, (for) men go to them of their own accord..."(II, 12). In an expression of overwhelming despair the sage utters a wish that the

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In a progressively more vitriolic and damning indictment of the failures of the 'divine' pharaoh to respond aggressively to the current state of disruption, Ipu-wer draws up a 'Bill of Particulars' to set before the august feet of pharaoh upon which he bases his judgment of damnation.[1] In the initial part of the piece, introduced by the recurring emphatic "WHY REALLY", the sage lists the various kinds of disruptive forces which have thrown the kingdom into chaos: robbery, cessation of labor, infertility of land and people, the topsy-turvy nature of the social structure in which nobles are impoverished and the poor are rich, external attacks from "barbarians", the discontinuation of the mortuary services, and sabre-rattling among the vassals. The next major section, introduced by the recurring word "BEHOLD", shifts the emphasis to disasters which concern more the personal interests of the king: rebellion against the authority and prestige of the pharaoh whose awesome mystique and great authority are being spurned to such a degree that even despoilation of the royal tombs is taking place, and he stresses that fires of revolution could ignite at any moment. Then he points to the king's cultic duties in a section initiated by the repeated "Remember", indicating that in times past whenever such concerns were scrupulously pursued order was main-

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entire human population would cease to exist: "Ah, would that it were the end of men, no conception, no birth. Then the earth would cease from noise, without wrangling " (VI,1).

[1] For an excellent discussion of the literary structure, see Gardiner, op. cit.

tained, suggesting that such a renewed cultic interest by the king is essential for order to return. Then he attacks even Re, the sun god, in a livid accusation for failing to perceive the wickedness of men even in the "first generation" after creation and acting to eradicate it, thus laying the blame for the wickedness of man before the divine throne of the creator. Then turning to the reigning Pharaoh, the one commissioned by the creator to establish and maintain order in the Kingdom of Ma'at, he damns the king for his failures and his promotion of discord and destruction of order. Finally he concludes with a section introduced by the recurring "It is still, however, good", which combines nostalgic glances at the harmony of the past with a wistful hope for the return of the beneficent orders in the future.[1]

It is obvious that this Egyptian sage is a stalwart advocate of the beneficent powers of the cult, and is most distressed because the spheres of mortuary religion, the Egyptian temple cults, and the pharaonic duty as overseer and chief priest are transgressed, neglected, and even treated with contempt. The response of the fool which seems representative of the Vox Populi is that of growing pessimism with respect to the concern for or even the power of retribution; especially is this true of the creator Re, who, ironically, since he is the 'sun god', has become a Deus absconditus! "Indeed, the hot-tempered man says: If I knew where God is, then would I serve him".[2]

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[1] ANET, p. 443, footnote 44.

[2] Translation by Faulkner, "The Admonitions," p. 55.

Such cultic cynicism has apparently penetrated into the royal court.

The discontinuation of mortuary services and the profanation by blatant robbery of the sacred tombs of the glorious dead is lamented by Ipu-wer:

> WHY REALLY, many dead are buried in the river. The stream is a tomb, and the embalming-place has really become the stream.[1]

Even the expensive cedars and other opulent materials of the mortuary religion are unobtainable, because of the impoverished state of the kingdom, thus making impossible the building of pyramids and even mummification. Brigands have become so crass and disdainful of royal power, that they have robbed and desecrated the royal tombs:

> BEHOLD now, something has been done which never happened for a long time: the king has been taken away by poor men.
> BEHOLD, he who was buried as a falcon (now lies) on a (mere) bier. What the pyramid hid has become empty.[2]

Not only has mortuary religion been impossible to maintain and the realm of the powerful dead been profaned, but even the cults of Egypt have lost their mystique and secretive holiness:

> WHY REALLY, the writings of the august enclosure are read. The place of secrets which was (so formerly) is (now) laid bare.
> WHY REALLY, magic is exposed. Go-spells and enfold-spells are made ineffectual because they are repeated by (ordinary) people.[3]

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[1] II, 6; *ANET*, p. 441. Unless indicated otherwise, the other quotations of the text are taken from *ANET*.

[2] VII, 2f.

[3] VI, 6f.

In a nostalgic look at the past with an implicit imperative that the present Pharaoh reassert his role in the sacred cult, Ipu-wer reminds the royal head of his cultic duties which are necessary for the beneficent powers of cult to be released once again:

> Remember...how fumigation is made with incense, how water is offered from a jar in the early morning.
> Remember fattened ro-geese, terep-geese, and sat-geese, how the divine offerings are made to the gods.
> Remember how natron is chewed and how white bread is prepared by a man on the day of moistening the head.
> Remember how flagstaffs are set up and a stela[1] is carved, while a priest purifies the temples and the house of god is whitewashed like milk; how the fragrance of the horizon is made sweet, and how offering-bread is established.
> Remember how (ritual) regulations are adhered to, how (religious) dates are distributed, how one who has been inducted into priestly service may be removed for personal weakness--that is, it was carried out wrongfully...[2]

Then in an apparent accusation levelled against Re,[3] the creator and the one responsible for maintaining world order, he blames the sun god for creating men with wicked character and for failing to perceive that such wickedness would lead to the present period of the breakdown of order. Re should have acted as divine retributor and removed the

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[1] Faulkner translates this as "altar", or "offering stone" ("Notes," p. 28).

[2] XI, 1f. Faulkner remarks: "All the paragraphs opening with 'Remember' except the first, appear to refer to the performance of the ritual by the king, an act essential to the well-being of the land " ("The Admonitions," p. 60).

[3] The text is corrupted at this juncture, and thus it is difficult to know exactly who is the subject here and at the end of XI and the beginning of XII. We have accepted the argument of Otto that it is Re, the creator and one who was to maintain the order of the creation ("Weltanschauliche und Politische Tendenzschriften," pp. 131f.). Contrast this attack on the creator to the hymn found in Meri-ka-Re, ll. 131f.

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wickedness. Otto remarks in a perceptive article:

> Dem Schöpfer, der eigentlich ein 'guter Hirte' sein sollte, wird vorgeworden, er habe die Menschen in ihrem Charakter unzulänglich erschaffen und damit selbst die Weltordnung zerstört; die Götter werden als mitschuldig in dem Sinne bezeichnet, als sie auf Geheiss des Schöpfers in immer neuen Schöpfungsakten die Welt bis auf die trostlose Gegenwart fortgeführt haben.[1]

Ipu-wer then moves from his brazen attack upon the failures of the deity to his divine son sitting on the throne of Egypt whose failure to create and maintain order in society is painfully obvious.[2] In an impassioned accusation filled with heavy-handed irony, Ipu-wer declares:

> ...Authority, Perception, and Justice are with thee, (but) it is confusion which thou wouldst set throughout the land, together with noise of contention. Behold, one thrusts against another. Men conform to that which thou hast commanded. If three men go along a road, they are found to be two men: it is the greater number that kills the lesser. Does then the herdsman love death? So then thou wilt command that a reply be made: "It is *because* one man *loves* and another hates. *That is, their forms* are few everywhere." *This really means that thou has acted* to bring such (a situation) into being, and thou hast spoken lies....All these years are civil strife. A man may be slain on his (own) roof, while he is on the watch in his boundary house. Is he brave and saves himself?--that means that he will live....Would that thou mightest taste of some of the oppressions thereof![3]

Finally Ipu-wer looks to the future when orderly existence will

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[1] Otto, *op. cit.*

[2] The king's negligence in the sphere of cult is so apparent that even his officials are deceitfully enriching themselves by means of the offerings: "Behold, the king's men thrash around among geese, which are presented (to) the gods instead of oxen " (VIII, 10f.).

[3] XII, 11f.

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allow cultic concerns to be once more the norm of Egyptian society:

> But it is still good when the hands of men construct pyramids, when canals are dug, and when groves of trees are made for the gods (XIII, 10).

Such a longing for the restoration of order and therewith a restoration of the sacral orders of cult vividly describe the positive orientation of most Egyptian sages toward the beneficent powers of cult and mortuary religion. Their abusive neglect by the ideal chief priest, the reigning Pharaoh, has contributed to the withering decay of the political, religious, and social fabric of the Kingdom of *Ma'at*. To this sage both cultic rituals and sapiential instructions are necessary for the creation and the maintaining of order incorporated ideally within the Egyptian kingdom.

Instruction for King Meri-ka-Re.[1] Another sapiential piece written during the troubled First Intermediate Period is the Instruction for King Meri-ka-Re, originating in the Herakleopolitan court of King Meri-ka-Re, an Egyptian ruler of the tenth dynasty which was in competition with the kings of the eleventh dynasty of Thebes.[2] As the title indicates, the formal structure of the writing is that of the

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[1] For an English translation, see *ANET*, pp. 414-18. Among the scholarly investigations of this instruction, one should consult H. Brunner, "Ein weiteres Djedefhor-Zitat," *MDAIAK*, XIX (1963), 53; "Die Weisheitsliteratur," 99-102; Siegried Herrmann, *Untersuchungen zur Überliferungsgestalt Mittelägyptischer Literaturwerke*, pp. 54f.; William McKane, *Proverbs*, OTL (London: SCM Press, 1970), pp. 67f.; Rudolf Anthes, *Lebensregeln und Lebensweisheit der alten Ägypter*, Der Alte Orient, XXXII (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche, p. 17f.); A. Scharff, *Der historische Abschnitt der Lehre für König Merikarē*, SBAW, VIII (C. H. Beck, 1936); Aksel Volten, *Zwei Altägyptische Politische Schriften*, Analecta Aegyptiaca, IV (Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1945).

[2] Scharff, *op. cit.*, p. 8, points to ll. 140f. and argues that

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Instruction genre, though a new twist is added by court propagandists who present the Instruction as that of the dead father of Meri-ka-Re who is instructing his son from the realm of the after-life in matters pertaining to the wise and righteous guidance of the kingdom of Ma'at.[1] In this piece of court propaganda, Meri-ka-Re sets forth a delineation of his political, social, and religious policies which are to be in direct contrast to the mistaken, and sometimes catastrophic, policies of his predecessor.[2] He gives an authoritative basis to his policies by having them placed on the lips of his dead father, thus making his policies appear to come from his dead father who has joined the world of the divine. Thus in this Instruction, the sages of the court seek to reaffirm the importance of the old orders.

The content of the Instruction involves sapiential admonitions with numerous motivation, causal, and result clauses concerning the correct sapiential policies to follow in the administration of the Egyptian Kingdom, which, as has been stressed, is regarded by the

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Khety was the father to whom the Instruction was attributed (also see ll. 109f.).

[1] For the formal characteristics of the Instruction genre, see Brunner, "Die Weisheitsliteratur". Such a stylistic device of communications with the dead may be seen in the "letters to the dead" (see, Volten, op. cit., p. 83). Another sapiential Instruction purported to be from a dead Pharaoh is "The Instruction of King Amen-em-het" (ANET, pp. 418-19); see G. Posener, Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la XII^e Dynastie (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1956); and A. De Buck, "The Instruction of Amenemmes," Mélanges Maspero, Orient Ancien, I (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institue Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1935-38), pp. 847-852.

[2] Volten, op. cit., p. 85.

Egyptian wise as the incorporation of world order. Thus, all of the wise admonitions emanate from the central locus of the King's responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of Ma'at, a responsibility that is most urgently needed in the current period of distress, and which was not forcefully and adequately carried forth by the dead king as can be seen in a number of extremely frank and quite unique admissions of failure by a supposedly divine pharaoh:

> Behold, a misfortune happened in my time. The Thinite regions were hacked up. It really happened through what I had done, and I knew of it (only) after (it) was done. Behold, my recompense (came) out of what I had done.[1]

By contrast the young king Meri-ka-Re is advised:

> DO JUSTICE WHILST THOU ENDUREST UPON EARTH. Quiet the weeper; do not oppress the widow; supplant no man in the property of his father; and impair no officials at their posts.[2]

The motivation for establishing and maintaining Ma'at is clearly stated in a reference to Meri-ka-Re's eventually being able to join the world of the gods, having successfully passed through the place of judgment: "Thou shalt reach me, without having an accuser."[3] Revolving around this central concern to establish and maintain Ma'at are the social, political, and, most important for our study, religious admonitions.[1] In the area of political concerns, the 'dead' king instructs his successor to remove troublemakers from the kingdom, establish safe boundaries, foster young political supporters, and maintain a strong and aggressive military policy. Just social policies are to be implemented, including the refraining from oppressing the weak, maintaining a just legal system, rewarding the just, and punishing the wicked.

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[1] ll. 119f. Also see ll. 69f. Such a frank admission demonstrates the depths to which the dogma of the divine, infallible king had plummeted.

[2] ll. 46f.

[3] l. 139. The idea supports the cultic view of a judgment of the dead following death, and indicates that when the king is judged, there should be no accusers to testify against him. The idea of a reckoning of the Pharaohs before a divine tribunal is discussed in detail in ll. 53f., and is similar to the 125th chapter of "The Book of the Dead" (ANET, pp. 34f.). Volten remarks concerning this passage in Meri-ka-Re: "Der Inhalt der Schrift wird hiermit kurz und genau angegeben. Sie lehrt, wie der König Merikarê das Reich gerecht regieren soll, damit er im Jenseits, wenn er seinem Vater begegnet, ohne Anlage

This concern for establishing and maintaing Ma'at and following the proper rules of attitude and conduct which result from the cogent analyses of the spheres of world order also enters into the cultic realm, and as we shall see, this Instruction provides us with one of the most important Egyptian sapiential texts for assessing the views of the Egyptian wise toward cult. The father instructs his son who theoretically is the one responsible for maintaining the cults of Egypt, especially the state cult, not to neglect cultic concerns, but rather to participate whole-heartedly in the performance of his cultic role:

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beim Totengericht freigesprochen werden kann " (op. cit., p. 85). Throughout this Instruction, it is apparent that even the Pharaoh is subject to the ethical laws of the creator deity (see Eberhard Otto, "Weltanschauliche und Politische Tendenzschriften," Ägyptologie, HO, I (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1952), p. 115.

[1] The Pharaoh was regarded as the ideal wise man who should develop according to this Instruction, an ability to speak well (ll. 31f.), study the wisdom of the ancient savants, incorporate the virtue of patience, and learn how to avoid evil (ll. 35f.) in order that he might meet the expectations incorporated in the affirmation: "The (Lord of) the Two Banks is (already wise) when he comes forth from the womb " (ll. 115f.).

> Make monuments...for the god. That is what makes to live the name of him who does it. A man should do what is of advantage to his soul: the monthly service of the priest, putting on the white sandals, visiting the temple, revealing the mysteries, having access to the shrine, and eating bread in the temple. MAKE THE OFFERING-TABLE FLOURISH, INCREASE THE LOAVES, and add to the daily offerings. It is an advantage to him who does it. Make thy monuments to endure according as thou art able. A single day gives for eternity, and an hour effects accomplishment for the future. The god is aware of him who works for him.[1]

In this admonition extended by a number of motivation clauses, the king's ideal role as the chief priest and overseer of the Egyptian cult is stressed. Religious obligations such as the building of temples and shrines for 'the god' and participation in the cult are to be dutifully carried out. Several motivations are listed as to why these cultic duties should not be shirked: the perpetuation of the memory of the Pharaoh probably by means of his name being carved in the building inscriptions of temples under his direction is one, but the most important is the same as the general one given at the end of the Instruction, and that is, that by fulfilling his cultic duties the king will come successfully into the realm of the future life, since 'the god' who is responsible for creating and overseeing world order is aware of the Pharaoh who does his cultic duties and, therefore, will reward him accordingly, not only in this life, but in the one to come.[2]

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[1] ll. 63f. For a discussion of the significance of this passage, see Schmid, Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung, pp. 59f. He remarks: "Die so zentrale Funktion des Maat-Begriffs in kultischen Zusammenhängen zeigt, dass der Ägypter den Kult(zumindest auch) als Teil der Bemühung um die umfassende Weltordnung verstanden " (p. 60).

[2] A similar admonition and motivation is found later: "Act for the god, that he may act similarly for thee, with oblations which make the offering-table flourish and with a carved inscription that is what bears witness to thy name. The god is aware of him who acts for him " (ll. 129f.).

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The orderly transition from this life to the future life by means of mortuary religion is also an accepted dogma in this Instruction, as can be seen in the admonition that Meri-ka-Re should not destroy the necropolis as his predecessor apparently did by re-using the stones of earlier tombs in the construction of his own tomb:

> Granite comes to thee without hindrance. Do not injure the monument of another; thou shouldst quarry stone in Troia. Do not build thy tomb out of ruins, what had been made (going) into what is to be made.[1]

The implication is that the mortuary cult centered around the tombs of the former pharaohs and nobles should not be disturbed by destroying their resting places, for such an evil atrocity is punished: "Egypt fights even in the necropolis, by hacking up graves, by...I did the same, and the same happened as is done to one who transgressed the way of the god." Thus 'the god' punishes the king who disrupts this orderly transition to the future life and the continuance of a future existence in a tomb.[2] The most significant admonition concerning mortuary religion is the admonition: "Enrich thy house of the West; embellish thy place of the necropolis."[3] But even more important is the means by which Meri-ka-Re is to embellish his tomb. He is to do so by being "an upright man" and "one who executes the justice upon which (men's) hearts rely."[1] Thus by establishing and maintaining justice, the king's participation in the future life is assured. The admonition is followed by the comparative proverb: "More acceptable is the character of one upright of heart than the ox of the evildoer", a stunningly ethical observation that condemns the perfunctory religiosity of the wicked who may participate in a grandiose scale in the proper ritual observances of cult, but who, by reason of their wickedness, negate the value of these observances. For the god prefers one who is upright even though he may appear empty-handed before him in the temple.[2]

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[1] ll. 78f.

[2] This passage seems to suggest that each pharaoh should respect the tombs of his predecessors whether or not they were of his dynasty. Perhaps the civil wars that plagued Egypt during this period were even extended to the destruction of an opposing dynasty's tombs (see Volten, op. cit., p. 89).

[3] ll. 127f. Such may be a quotation of Hor-dedef (see H. Brunner "Eine neue Entlehnung aus der Lehre des Djedefhor," MDAIK, XIV (1956), 17-19.

The Instruction incorporates within its text a cultic hymn to the creator god which is quite comparable to other Egyptian cultic hymns to the creator deities. In glowing praise and joyous thanksgiving, the god's creation and concern for his creation, and his maintenance of justice which pervades the creation are magnificently described. Such an example of a supposedly cultic genre within a sapiential text illustrates a point that will be most important when we consider Hebrew Wisdom Psalms, for, as can be seen here as well as in the lament of the Lebensmüde, the wise utilized and composed poetic psalms.

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[1] This may refer to the practice of inscribing one's just deeds upon the walls of one's tomb. (See Schmid, Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit, pp. 44f.).

[2] The dangers of cultic ritual without righteous living are indicated by the wise of the ancient Near East, but such criticism does not lead them to withdraw from cultic participation, except in very disruptive situations. Morenz makes this clear when he states concerning this passage: "Es wird auf die Gefahr des Kultus hingewiesen, nicht er selbst in Frage gestellt. Daher bezieht die Weisheitsliteratur, der es um rechts Verhalten im ganzen Menschenleben geht, den Kultus in ihre Weisungen ausdrücklich ein " (Ägyptische Religion, 104). This section also deals with the worshipping of the image of the deity when it is moved in cultic procession (ll. 125f.), a point to be considerd in more detail later. However, the passage includes a discussion of the Deus absconditus, and while the hidden god at times may reveal himself in the form of an image in the processional march, and at such times should be worshipped, Meri-ka-Re is to remember that this hidden god continues to oversee the world and is well aware of the actions of men which he recompences accordingly. Thus the problem of a deity being associated with an image receives sapiential reflection, and the conclusion is not a rejection of the cultic dogma of a deity being present in an image, but rather an

From this very important Instruction, we have excellent testimony to the views of the pious sages toward cult in Egypt. To the composers of this Instruction, cult is certainly one of the spheres of world order overseen by the Urgott who created the world and established Ma'at. Consequently the Pharaoh is not to neglect his cultic responsibilities as the overseer and chief priest of Egyptian cults. For if he does so, he will be punished according to the principle of retribution, a fate apparently suffered by Meri-ka-Re's predecessor. Mortuary religion is again a primary means for the orderly transition of the Pharaoh to the future world, but in this text, there is injected a close connection between mortuary ritual and the justice of the king, both of which insure his glorious participation in the future life. Thus cultic devotion and the maintenance of justice are closely interwoven duties of the king.

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explanation that the deity is not limited to the presence of the image, but rather knows the hearts of all men (ll. 132f.).

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The Middle Kingdom

Introduction. The chaos of the First Intermediate Period was finally put to an end by the vigorous rulers of the twelfth dynasty at Thebes, and gradually we see these kings reasserting a strong, authoritarian rule which slowly strangled the individualism and demands for individual justice which had blossomed during the earlier period. A reassertion of the divine nature of the kings became accepted dogma, and once more, scribal texts point not only to this but also to the importance of service to and worship of kings upon whom one's transition to the future life by means of mortuary religion depended.[1] But the rebuilding of the forces which had held together the Kingdom of Ma'at during the Old Kingdom was not easily accomplished, and the first king of the Twelfth dynasty, as we shall see, is presented as quite frankly admitting his assassination.

The Instruction of King Amen-em-het.[2] Once more we find words placed on the lips of a dead Pharaoh, Amen-em-het I. Written by a court scribe under the patronnage of Sen-Usert I upon the occasion of

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[1] For an excellent discussion of the Middle Kingdom, see John Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 125-153.

[2] For a recent transcription, collation of texts, textual notes, and translation, see Wolfgang Helck, Der Text der Lehre Amenemhets I. für seinen Sohn, Kleine Ägyptische Texte, I (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1969). Also see ANET, 418-419, for an English translation. For scholarly literature on Amen-em-het, see A. De Buck, "La composition littéraire des Enseignements d'Amenemhet," Muséon, LIX (1946), 183-200; "The Instruction of Amenemmes," Mélanges Maspero, I, Orient Ancien (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institute Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1935-38), 847-52; Alan H. Gardiner, "The Earliest Manuscripts of the Instruction of Amenemmes I," Mélanges Maspero, 479-496;

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his ascent to the throne, this instruction purported to be an instruction coming from his dead predecessor on the throne.[1] Such probably had as its primary purpose the legitimation of the right of succession of the new pharaoh, and thus is rightly considered a piece of royal propaganda.[2]

The most noteworthy feature of the piece is reflected in the candid admission of the failures of the now defunct king who, to his obvious chagrin, was caught off guard and subsequently assassinated by his own treacherous subordinates. Yet efforts are made to present the dead king in glowing terms, for he vaunts his seemingly unparalleled achievements in the areas of military conquests, building projects, administration of justice, and national prosperity. His major failure lay in his lack of perception in choosing loyal courtiers and supporters, and thus, this is his major emphasis to his new successor, that is, he should be wise and perceptive in the appointing of loyal supporters to strategic posts.

H. Grapow, "Die Einleitung der Lehre des Königs Amenemhet," *ZÄS*, LXXIX (1954), 97-105; Battiscombe Gunn, "Notes on Ammenemes I," *JEA*, XXVII (1941), 2-6; G. Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la XII^e Dynastie* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1956); and Rudolf Anthes, "The Legal Aspects of the Instruction of Amenemhet," *JNES*, XVI (1957), 176-191.

[1] The piece should be regarded as coming from a deceased Pharaoh (see Posener, *op. cit.*, pp. 66f; Grapow, *op. cit.*, pp. 97f.; and Helck, *op. cit.*, pp. 12f.), and not as a text presented at the occasion of Sen-Usert's becoming a co-regent, ten years before his father's death (Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 495; and Rudolf, *op. cit.*, pp. 185f.).

[2] De Buck compares the Instruction to "Letters to the Dead" ("La composition littéraire des Enseignements d'Amenemhet," p. 189).

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What is important for us is a re-emphasis upon the dogma of the divine Pharaoh seen in the titulary and in the conclusion. Also the statement made to Sen-Usert that in his succession to the throne he "has appeared as a god" coupled with the good possibility that the text was read during the coronation festival of the new king make it probable that the sapiential text accepts the virtues of loyal service to and worship of the divine king. The attack against the kings made in the First Intermediate Period by the critical wise is now being countered by the loyalist sages of the Middle Kingdom.

In addition he makes reference to his pyramid, indicating again a positive affirmation of the value of the mortuary cult (iii, 1f.).

The Instruction of a Man for his Son.[1] One of the most obvious pieces of sapiential propaganda, originating in the early part of the twelfth dynasty,[2] is "The Instruction of a Man for his Son" which attempts to inculcate within the lesser officials, scribes, and bureaucrats of the kingdom a zealous loyalty to the Pharaoh, thereby solidifying the structure of the kingdom around the cohesive center of the Egyptian throne.[3] Once again we are able to see the response of the loyalist wise to the earlier attacks against the authority and divinity of the Pharaoh, by means of pacifying potential sources of discontent, disorder, and even anarchy. Such an attempt to generate the spirit of an enthusiastic devotee within the breasts of the minor officials was to be effectuated by the emphasis upon an achievable and prosperous elevation in the royal ranks, an elevation open to the scribal opportunists whose loyalty and devotion would bring them more directly into contact with the divine blessing radiating forth from the royal god.[1]

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[1] For an eclectic text, tranliteration, and translation, see K. A. Kitchen, "Studies in Egyptian Wisdom Literature--I, 'The Instruction by a Man for his Son'," OrAnt, VIII (1969), 189-208. Also see Hans Goedicke, "'Die Lehre eines Mannes für seinen Sohn'," ZÄS, XCIV (1967), 62-71; and Posener, Littérature et politique.

[2] Goedicke, op. cit., p. 94.

[3] R. J. Williams, "Literature as a Medium of Political Propaganda in Ancient Egypt," The Seed of Wisdom (Toronto: University of

> Great (shall be) thy portion for thee,
> (If) thou spendest thy lifetime within the counsels of thy god.
> Adore the King of Upper Egypt, revere the King of Lower Egypt (ll. 18-19).

Following the title and typical summons to gather and listen to his wisdom, this anonymous wise man articulates in the form of admonitions the various qualities which should be developed within the character of the young official: repute, diligence, silence, trustworthiness, reliability, and attentiveness. Then in the central section of the teaching, he turns to his primary concern, the indoctrination of his youthful audience in the loyalist creed of the aspiring young 'man of the king.'

Toronto Press, 1964), p. 27.

[1] Kitchen remarks: "The promises of advancement and material advantage, the references to the humble surpassing the great and to the last being first, plus the immediacy of achievement ('within a lifetime'), are all a powerful appeal to the petites gens and the have-nots, to win their support" (op. cit., p. 197).

Do not turn away from the god,[1]
But adore him, love him as (loyal) supporters.
He will bless as his power shall grant;
Whom he neglects is one who has no prospects,
Worth more is he than millions of men, to him
whom he favoured (ll. 8-9).

Such a sapiential document is a clear expression of the dogma of royal divinity which should make the Pharaoh the center of piety and devotion to the scribes serving within the royal domain.[2]

The Instruction of Sehetep-ib-Re.[3] Another sapiential instruction bearing the noticeable marks of court propaganda is the hymnic instruction[4] of Sehetep-ib-Re, a high official, perhaps even the vizier, of Pharaoh Amen-em-het III (Ni-maat-Re) of the Twelfth Dynasty, which is written for the primary purpose of engendering within the hearts of the students[5] a cultist attitude of fervent devotion toward the divine Pharaoh.[1] The entire counsel is imbued with a venerative reverence concerning the divinity of the royal personage, a reverence which is incorporated into the admonition to serve the Pharaoh with adoration, for such counsel is

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[1] A variant reading is "the King." Kitchen suggests that the variant demonstrates which deity was in mind, at least to one copyist (op. cit., p. 193, footnote 25).

[2] Such service may have included the cultic worship of the living king (see Morenz, Egyptian Religion, p. 85).

[3] This instruction was found on the stele of Sehetep-ib-Re at Abydos. The translation we have utilized is that of John A. Wilson, ANET, p. 431.

[4] The hymnic character of this instruction is most important, for it is another indication that the wise were familiar with cultic genres and, if the occasion arose, could utilize them in the literary formation of their writings.

[5] Williams argues: "It was addressed to the high functionaries and members of the nobility by some important personage, probably the vizier" ("Literature as Propaganda in Ancient Egypt,"), p. 25.

> ....a counsel of eternity
> And a manner of living aright
> And for passing a lifetime in peace.[2]

Following the admonition to "worship King Ni-maat-Re," in hymnic fashion the divine qualities of the monarch are listed which should inspire awe and the concomitant loyalty that the sage wished to infuse within the audience. Thus the ruler is

> Perception which is in (men's) hearts,
> ....
> He is Re, by whose beams one sees,
> ....
> He is the Khnum of all bodies,
> ....
> He is the Bastet who protects the Two Lands,
> ....
> He is Sekhmet against him who transgresses his command.

In such a catalogue the wise man has presented the major emphases of Egyptian royal ideology which centers upon the king as the incorporation of the spheres of world order and through him and by him order, peace, prosperity, and the tranquility of eternity are created and maintained. Therefore he admonishes the officials and nobles of the kingdom to serve with unswerving loyalty the divine king and by this service perform as the functional extensions of the royal blessing and creative power and, by so doing, share in the rewards of such service by receiving the blissful abundance of the present and future lives. The obvious contrast between those who faithfully execute their duties of service and those who contribute to disorder by engendering a festering spirit of hostility or even rebellion is seen in the following:

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[1] Williams also contends that the piece was originally created by an earlier sage, possibly vizier Ptah-em-Djedhuti who was among those praised in the panegyric Papyrus Chester Beatty IV (cf. ANET, 431-432), and then appropriated by this later official (op. cit., pp. 25-26).

[2] Posener (Littérature et politique, p. 120) cogently observes: "La vénération du souverain prend ici le caractère d'une religion évoluée; l' auteur vent que le culte royal soit fait à la fois de piété personnelle et des pratiques extérieures de confiance aussi bien que de crainte. La foi monarchique suppose une forme de prosélytisme, et cette action incombe aux dignitaires du régime." Such a cultic emphasis centered around the worship of the divine pharaoh is one of the distinctive marks of the Egyptian sage's attitude towards cult. The same is true for the cultic concern of the Egyptian wise with mortuary

> He is Bastet who protects the two lands
> He who worships him will be one whom his arm shelters.
> He is Sekhmet against him who transgresses his command;
> He whom he hates will bear woes.

He concludes with a passionate summons to service and loyalty, and with a reference to the attendant benefits:

> Fight on behalf of his name,
> And be scrupulous in the oath to him
> (That) ye may be free from a taint of disloyalty.
> He whom the king has loved will be a revered one,
> (But) there is no tomb for a rebel against his majesty,
> And his corpse is cast into the water.
> If ye do this, your persons shall be unblemished--
> Ye will find it (so) forever.

Thus the loyal servant will participate in the blissful afterlife with the pharaoh, a reward gained through obedient service. However, the preparations of mortuary religion will be denied to the disloyal fool

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religion and the continuance of one's being in the orderly transition to the afterlife.

who in death will find himself without tomb and subsequently without eternal life.

The New Kingdom

Introduction.[1] Following the debacle of the Second Intermediate Period, the Egyptians, especially during the Thutmosid dynasty, established a tremendous empire in Africa and Asia, and once more we find literary creations of the wise: "In Praise of Learned Scribes," "The Instruction of Ani," and "The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet."

In Praise of Learned Scribes.[2] One of the most provocative sapiential texts which bespeaks the sage's concern to continue into the future life is Papyrus Chester Beatty IV, which takes the form of a panegyric to the illustrious savants of the distant past whose august fame and renowned writings provided schoolboys of ancient Egypt with human models after which to pattern their careers and with instructions concerning the moulding of such careers.

Written with the express purpose of creating a self-motivating

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[1] For a discussion of this period, see Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt, pp. 166f.

[2] An English translation is found in ANET, pp. 431-32. Hellmut Brunner provides not only a German translation, but also an excellent analysis of the text especially in the context of efforts made by Egyptologists to define the nature and scope of wisdom literature ("Die 'Weisen,' ihre 'Lehren' und 'Prophezeiungen' in altägyptischer Sicht," ZÄS, XCIII [1966], 29-35).

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spirit of diligent dedication to the scribal professions within the Egyptian empire, this sage bases his admonitions to diligent study and labor on the idea that the achievement of undisputed fame and prestige as a sage is the only certain means for realizing eternal existence. But such an emphasis may involve not only the commonly held idea of an existence predicated upon indisputable renown which comes to the scholar who promulgates famous writings, but also the intimation that the schoolboys throughout the ages who study the writings of their august predecessors will remember their names in mortuary prayers and thereby ensure their continued existence in the realm of the living dead.

First of all, the sage contrasts the coveted position of the famous wise who continue to exist eternally by means of their writings and that of the person who stakes his eternal existence upon the trappings of mortuary religion. The celebrated wise may have had their tombs and mortuary services, but now, centuries later, "their mortuary service is (gone); their tombstones are covered with dirt; and their graves are forgotten." However, they possess something infinitely better. Their lector priest is their papyrus roll, their children are their students, their writing boards are their 'beloved sons,' their reed-pens are their children,[1] and their stone ostraca are their wives,[1] and, most important, their tombs which provide them with continued existence are their writings. Thus, "their names are (still) pronounced because of their books which they made, since they were good and the memory of him who made them (lasts) to the limits of eternity."

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[1] Children, especially a "son-he-loves," and lector priests were deemed essential according to mortuary religion for the continuance into the future life, since they both were needed to provide the proper burial and to ensure the reading of the ritual texts that would magically provide for the continuing needs of the deceased.

Then the sage turns directly to his students and admonishes them to work in order to achieve such lasting fame, and, consequently, continuance into the future life, for famous writings handed down through the ages not only serve the same function as tombs and the reliefs and mortuary texts placed upon the walls, but are actually superior in providing existence into the future life for the savant, because the famous writings easily outlast the crumbling tombs, the mummies which turn to dust, and the extinction of one's survivors:

> More effective is a book than a decorated tombstone or an established tomb-wall. Such things make buildings and pyramids for the sake of pronouncing their names.[2] Without doubt a name in the mouth of men is of benefit in the necropolis. A MAN IS PERISHED, his corpse is dust, all his relatives are

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[1] A suggestion by Wilson, ANET, p. 432, footnote 2, for "the back of a stone."

[2] Paintings and reliefs on the walls of tombs were deemed important in mortuary religion for depicting the important activities and the position of the deceased during his earthly life, and were to ensure him of the continuance of such a state in the future life. "The pictures summed up the content of the dead man's life on earth. They had to be at his disposal in the same way as the offerings of food and clothing " (Morenz, Egyptian Religion, p. 202). In addition mortuary texts were placed either on the walls of the pyramids or on the face of the sarcophagus as inscriptions (Pyramid Texts) in the Old Kingdom, in the coffins of private individuals from the First Intermediate Period (Coffin Texts), or written on papyrus scrolls and buried with the mummy from the time of the New Kingdom (The Book of the Dead) (Ibid., p. 227). These included "liturgical lists" of various provisions and materials deemed essential for the future

> come to the ground--(But) it is writing that makes him remembered in the mouth of a reciter. More effective is a book than the house of the builder or tombs in the West. It is better than a (well-) founded castle or a stela in a temple.

Therefore a famous sage can be assured of future existence, because his students will remember his name and will recite the necessary mortuary texts which magically insure his future life. The wise, being cogent observers of reality, readily recognized the shortcomings of mortuary religion, for the crumbled tombs, destroyed mortuary stelae, and the long forgotten names of the deceased were constant reminders that future existence predicated upon mortuary religion was illusory. But in contrast the writings of the famous scribe provided him permanency in the future realm: "Though they are gone and their names are forgotten, it is writing that makes them remembered." Once more a sage reflects over the sacred rituals and dogmas of mortuary religion and disputes their cogency and effectiveness, preferring to achieve immortality through the means of acquiring an august reputation, and hoping that his name will continue on the lips of scribes throughout the centuries, and in that way find the future life that mortuary religion had so obviously failed to provide.

The Instruction of Ani.[1] During the 18th dynasty another

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existence, so that through the magical power of the recitation of these texts by the deceased, he could continue to exist independently of any lector priest or descendants (Ibid., pp. 209, 229).

[1] Translations have been made by Wilson, ANET, pp. 420-21; Émile Suys, La Sagesse d'Ani, Analecta Orientalia, XI (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1935); and Aksel Volten, Studien zum Weisheitsbuch des Anii, Det. Kgl. Danske Videnskaberneg Selskab. Historisk-Filologiske Meddelelser, XXIII (Copenhagen: Levin and

sage, this time a lower echelon temple scribe, produced a wisdom writing meant to instruct his own son, a scribal novitiate, in the general areas of social, civic, and religious duties and responsibilities which would be his in the scribal profession.[1] As will become obvious, this is another sage who is most concerned to bring the realm of cult under sagacious scrutiny.

In iii 3-9, Ani instructs his young son[2] to observe the public festival of his deity by participating actively in the public offerings, singing, and dancing which occur during the festive time. The two motivations which Ani accents for such cultic involvement are the avoidance of the deity's anger against the cultically negligent, and the enhancement of the career of the observant sage by the deity "who will magnify the name of him who does it...." In fact, the young man should be sure that his cultic service is duly witnessed and recorded in writing so as to have proof of his faithful cultic participation.[3]

Munksgaard, 1937).

[1] Volten lists the following areas of concern in Ani: religious duties, obligations to parents, obligations as an honorable man, friendship, relations to superiors, hospitality and help for the poor, behavior towards one's enemy, civic responsibility, and diligence in scribal training (op. cit., p. 57).

[2] In this case, the 'son' of Ani, Khonsuhotep, appears to have been his real son (vii 18f.).

[3] The recording process "might well imply that only such persons as were recorded in writing on temple rolls were accorded the privilege of direct participation in the festivities of the god " (Alan Gardiner, "A Didactic Passage Re-examined," JEA, XLV [1959], p. 15).

In iv 1-4 the experienced sage considers what is to be the proper demeanor of the wise cultic participant, and it is that which should characterize the wise man in any and all circumstances: dispassionate and well-tempered self-control, or, more simply put, 'silence.' Thus the ideal sage, the 'silent man,' should be one's model even in the realm of the cult. Such a decorum of self-control avoids the boisterous loqaciousness and frenzied activity which characterize the 'heated man,' who foolishly believes his passionate and garrulous cultic activities, bordering on the edge of sacrilege, will ensure the attention of the deity, and, concomitantly, the divine favor, but in reality disturb the inner sanctity and peacefulness of the divine abode, thereby resulting in the arousal of the divine wrath. How much more effective, counsels Ani, is the solemn and composed solicitude of the sagacious worshipper who lovingly presents his offering with a silent entreaty before the hidden and secretive deity, sure that[1] "he will do what thou needest, he will hear what thou sayest, and he will accept thy offering..."

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[1] Morenz refers to Urk., Iv, 99, which speaks of the image's sanctity and hiddenness: "Less accessible (dsr) than that which is in heaven, or secret than the affairs of the nether world, more (hidden) than the inhabitants of the primeval ocean." He later explains that the power of the deity makes contact extremely dangerous, and, therefore, the sanctity of "the Other" must be observed by strict precautions which maintain segregation. For example, the deity's image was concealed in deep darkness and approached and handled only by the properly initiated priest (Egyptian Religion, pp. 94, 99). Anthes remarks concerning the devotion of the scribe in this passage: "Aus solchem persönlichen Verhältnis zu Gott erwächst die innere Frömmigkeit und die Betonung einer Sittlichkeit, die ihren Massstab nicht in der äusseren Ordnung als solcher, sondern unmittelbar in dem Willen Gottes findet " (Lebensregeln und Lebensweisheit, p. 28).

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Ani, in contrast to his contemporary, the author of "In Praise of Learned Scribes," impresses upon his young son the importance of prompt attention to mortuary provisions in order that he may secure an official's orderly transition to the future life (iv 14-v 4).[1] Even a young and non-affluent scribe should be concerned with his future dwelling, for death's messenger comes to all irrespective of age or preparation.

The most extensive section concerning cultic participation occurs in vii 12-17 in which the young scribe is admonished to make offerings and to prostrate himself in the name of the deity, and yet maintain a discreet distance as a restrained spectator when the veiled image of the deity passes through the public throngs during a holy procession occurring during festival seasons.[2] He reiterates the motivations for cultic observance to be those of appeasement of the divine wrath ("Let thy eye have regard to the nature of his anger") and personal exaltation by the deity of the minor official ("...they are magnified whom he magnifies "). Such would appeal, of course, to the young scribe in his quest to orient himself within the beneficent spheres of order maintained by the deity, and in his efforts to progress upward within the scribal hierarchy. Finally, he interjects a perceptive insight concerning the images of the sun god, for the real deity is "the sun which is on the horizon," though through means of cultic activity, particularly the offering of incense, he is able to appear especially during festivals among men in the earthly realm in the images located in the cultic shrines, and, thereby, to effect blessings for the cultic participants.[1] The tension between the multiplicity of images in cultic religion and the customary sapiential understanding of the deity who created and maintains the order of creation is resolved to the satisfaction of this sage, an effort that shows indepth reflection of the sage over certain incongruities in cultic dogmas.

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[1] Cf. Hor-dedef and Meri-ka-Re. By the time of the New Kingdom, even the lowly scribe could hope for a future life, as is evidenced in the "Book of the Dead." (See C. J. Bleeker, The Religion of Ancient Egypt [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969], pp. 47-48).

[2] Morenz explains that the deity's image was brought out into the antechambers of the temple during processions, though it seems to have remained concealed, and was probably veiled as it was carried on its portable shrine (op. cit., p. 94). Thus the young scribe should not be foolish enough to inquire concerning its visible form nor should he press close to the deity in an effort to "see for himself" and thereby profane the sanctity and mystery of the divine image.

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[1] "God, the Distant One, is made present in the image by the daily service, and during the festival the deity 'appeared,' i. e. its image left the sanctuary and, borne by the priests in a shrine... upon a barque, went out among the crowd " (Morenz, op. cit., pp. 88-89). The reference by Ani to the sun god as the real 'god of this land' is probably a reference to Amon-Re, the national deity of the Egyptian empire, whose prominence rose with that of the Theban 18th dynasty. He was "mysterious of form, glistening of appearance, the marvelous god of many forms...his soul is in heaven, his body is in the West, and his statue is in Hermonthis, heralding his appearances... One is Amon, hiding himself from them...no gods know his true form...He is too mysterious that his majesty might be disclosed, he is too great that (men) should ask about him, too powerful that he might be known. Instantly (one) falls in a death of violence at the utterance of his mysterious name, unwittingly or wittingly. No (other) god knows how to call him by it, the Soul who hides his name, according as he is mysterious " (A hymn to Amon from the 19th dynasty, ANET, pp. 368-69). Yet Amon's national prominence also went hand in hand with the fact that he was "the linchpin between national ritual and popular piety," and the object of the devotion of royalist and commoner alike (Morenz,

This Instruction provides us with ample material to validate the thesis that cult was an important sphere to be analyzed by the sages, and in this case, participation in cult received a most definitely favorable emphasis. To Ani, the observant scribe could not only avoid the destructive power of the deity, but at the same time could enjoy his favor which could be tangibly realized in his rise in the scribal ranks. Even the much disputed mortuary religion receives a positive concern, for Ani considered it necessary for the participation of the wise in the future life. But above all, Ani informs us that in the sacral sphere as well as in the spheres of everyday existence, the wise man is to incorporate within his character the decorum of the 'silent man.'

The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet.[1] Another Egyptian sage who provides us with important insights into the cultic sphere of world order is Amen-em-Opet, a high official in the administration of royal estates,[2] who wrote his instruction perhaps as early as the 19th

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op. cit., pp. 104-106). Thus Ani's own piety and theological reflection flows from the theological circles of the New Kingdom which exalt devotion for Amon-Re.

[1] An excellent recent textual examination, translation, and commentary has been written by Irene Grumach, Untersuchungen zur Lebenslehre des Amenemope, Münchener Ägyptologische Studien, XXIII (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1972). For English translations, see ANET, pp. 421-24; and F. L. Griffith, "The Teaching of Amenophis, the Son of Kanakht," JEA, XII (1926), 191-231.

[2] H. Brunner, "Die Weisheitsliteratur," p. 106. Among the duties of Amen-em-Opet was "setting up the divine offerings for all the gods," probably indicating a regulation of types and quantities of sacrifices to be given to each deity.

dynasty (13th century, B.C.).[1] Writing expressly for his own son, Hor-em-maa-kheru, a young priestly scribe functioning within the temple of Min, the father seeks to instruct him in the familiar areas of the official or scribal functionary who seeks to orientate himself within the beneficient spheres of world-order overseen by the god of justice by following the model of the "silent man," and by avoiding the destructive behavior of the "passionate man." By faithfully discharging his scribal duties as the deputy of the deity of justice, the young sage can expect to be rewarded with success and prosperity.[2]

As concerns our subject, it is interesting to note that Amen-em-Opet never directly and explicity admonishes his young adherent to perform specific cultic duties within the framework of the cultic community, a fact that has led one scholar to remark that the reason is the young priestly scribe would have that impressed upon him by the very nature of his office.[3] Therefore, Amen-em-Opet is not giving his son cultic instructions, but rather is seeking as a counsellor to impress upon him the correct conduct and behavior befitting a priestly scribe within the realm of the holy. In keeping with his desire to school his son in the proper decorum within the various spheres of life, he establishes the model for proper behavior within the cultic sphere in the fourth chapter, which, according to Grumach, is a Pausenkapital, which in terms of structure and content, is an artistically constructed poem that is placed within two groups of chapters contrasting the "passionate man" (chapters 1-3) to the "silent man" (chapters 4-7).[1] As a result of the sage's literary skills, strophe one of the poem in chapter four concerns the "passionate man," therefore succinctly summarizing the central subject of chapters 1-3, and the second strophe presents his opposite, the "silent man," which provides a summation of the major subject of chapters 4-7.[2] Wilson translates the chapter as follows:[3]

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[1] An early date has been proven by the discovery of a broken, though unpublised, ostracon by Černý in the Cairo Museum which contains parts of 3, 8-4, 10, and which dates from the late 21st dynasty, indicating that it had been known for some time, and possibly is as early as the 19th dynasty (see Ronald J. Williams, "The Alleged Semitic Original of the Wisdom of Amenemope," JEA XLVII (1961), 100-106). Such a discovery undercuts the extensive arguments of Drioton that the Hebrew Instruction in Proverbs 22:17-24:22 was the original from which the Instruction of Amen-em-Opet was partially written ("Le Livre des Proverbes et la sagesse d'Amenemope," Sacra Pagina, I [Gembloux: Éditions J. Duculot, 1959], 228-421).

[2] Such may be noticed in the introduction and the first chapter.

[3] R. Anthes, Lebensregeln und Lebensweisheit der Alten Agypter, p. 29.

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[1] Irene Grumach, op. cit., pp. 44f. Anthes, in a superb article, goes even farther to suggest that the poem, the only one in the entire Instruction, has the general function of poems placed in larger works, and that is to summarize the main point of the entire work, in other words the poem is a condensation of the Instruction (cf. the poem in Sinuhe and the four poems in "The Dialogue of a Man Tired of Life with his Ba"). ("Die Funktion des vierten Kapitels in der Lehre des Amenemope," Archäologie und Altes Testament [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1970], pp. 9-18).

[2] Ibid.

[3] ANET, p. 422.

Strophe I	Strophe II
As for the heated man of the temple	(But) the truly silent man holds himself apart.
He is like a tree growing in the open.	He is like a tree growing in a garden.
In the completion of a moment (comes) its loss of foliage,	It flourishes and doubles its yield;
And its end is reached in the shipyards;	It (stands) before its lord.
(Or) it is floated far from its place,	Its fruit is sweet; its shade is pleasant;
And the flame is its burial shroud.	And its end is reached in the garden.

The two strophes exhibit external antithetical parallelism as the translation above indicates. The first lines of both strophes denote the two types of persons under consideration and constrasts their respective positions concerning the temple: the passionate man is within the temple, whereas the "silent man" is one who holds himself apart. The next two lines of each strophe describe the different areas in which the two trees, metaphorically describing the two opposite types of people, grow and develop. The final four lines in each strophe depict in graphic fashion the contrasting fates which meet each tree: destruction and pleasant development and preservation.[1]

The two major problems confronting the interpretation of the poem involve the meaning and translation of *m ḫntj* at the end of line 2 in Strophe I and *m ṯḥn.t.* in the second line of Strophe II; and the intent of the sage's statements that the "heated man" is within the temple whereas the "silent man" holds himself apart. With respect to the first problem, Posener has summarized the different possible translations: *ḫntj*--'courthouse,' 'courtyard of a temple,' 'outside,' 'prematurely,' 'in the open,' 'in an enclosed space,' or, by changing the text to *m hntj(-s)*, 'in the forest'; and *tḥn.t.*--'canal,' 'fertile soil,' 'plot,' and 'garden.'[1] Posener observes that the general idea, of course, is that the first tree grows in an area that ultimately leads to the demise of the tree, whereas the second grows in a place which causes it to flourish. More specifically he argues that perhaps the terms should be understood as a contrast between *endroit sombre* and *endroit ensoleillé*, that is, the position of the "silent man" is preferable because outside the temple he is like a tree that flourishes in the bright sunshine, a symbolic idea for being present before the sun god, whereas the position of the tree representing passionate man is within the temple which causes it to die from the lack of sunshine.[2] Integrally related to this is the problem of determining the intent of the sage's placing of the flourishing tree outside the temple and the desiccated tree within the temple. Fichtner's argument is that the "heated man" should be regarded as the priest or layman who participates actively in the cultic sphere, whereas, by contrast the truly wise man does not do so. Thus he concludes that the polemic against the cult opposes the idea of worship as *opus operatum*.[1] But such an interpretation falls before the axe of chapter five in which the "silent man," in contrast to the "heated man" who is characterized by an insatiable greed and therefore finds himself in the precarious position of those who are swept away by natural disasters, takes refuge in the temple:

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[1] Georges Posener, "Le chapitre IV d'Aménémopé," *ZÄS*, XCIX (1973), 129f.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 130ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

> Alle Schweigenden im Tempel aber,
> die sagen: "gross an Gunstbeweisen ist Re."
> Erfülle dich mit Schweigen, und du wirst das Leben finden,
> und dein Leib wird heil sein auf Erden (7:7-10).[2]

Unless we charge the sage with gross contradictions, Amen-em-Opet must be stating in this passage that the position of the "silent ones" is within the temple where they offer praise to Re even during times of disaster, and he intimates that such a response by the "silent" will lead to their preservation from catastrophe. Thus a more judicious solution to chapter IV is to argue that the sage is prescribing the preferred behavior of the "silent man" who in his decorum of discretion and his control of his passions behaves in the same manner in the

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[1] Fichtner, *Die altorientalische Weisheit*, p. 38.

[2] Translation by Gruman, *op. cit*., p. 49.

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cultic sphere, while by contrast the "passionate man," whose demeanor lacks self-control even in cultic activities, falsely believes that it is proximity to the divine that results in blessing, when actually because of his overzealous and boisterous behavior he is quickly destroyed for disrupting the silence and order of the divine sphere. The "silent man" in his religious piety continues to be characterized by discretion and a submissive faith. Grumach is correct in the observation: "Das Abseitsstellen des Frommen (6,7) ist denn auch nicht als Gegensatz zum Sein im Tempel gemeint, sondern nur als eine...Verhaltensweise.[1] Thus "holding himself apart" is not a rejection of the cultic duties of the wise, but rather a criticism of the bawdy, boisterous behavior of the fool within the cult who wrongly believes that such actions will negate the forces of retribution which will bring about his destruction for reasons of unwise behavior both within the cult and without, and an affirmation that the wise actions of the "silent man" both within and without the sacred sphere will lead to his good fortune within the sphere of retribution. Blessing may result from proximity to the divine, but it results only by means of wise behavior in the cult and in daily life.

Like his predecessor, Ani, Amen-em-Opet stresses to his young scribe the importance of praying to the sun disc each morning for prosperity and health, resting assured that:

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[1] Ibid., p. 45.

> He will give thee thy needs for this life,
> And thou wilt be safe from terror (X, 13f.).

The admonition concerning prayer occurs at the end of a chapter which contrasts the foolish pursuit of wealth, especially wealth obtained dishonestly, with the pious behavior of the true wise man who realizes that his needs will be met by the sun god who dispenses favor to the one who avoids the pitfalls of greed.

In chapter eight, Amen-em-Opet adds certain motivations to his admonitions pertaining to the control of one's tongue and the avoiding of injurious speech:

> Thou wilt find thy place within the temple,
> and thy provisions in the bread-offerings of thy lord;
> Thou wilt be revered in old age and be hidden (in) thy coffin,
> and be safe from the power of God (X, 21-XI, 5).[1]

Thus the sage obviously supports the importance of mortuary religion, for he who controls his tongue will receive as a reward a lovely grave. His statue will be kept in the temple and sustained by the temple offerings, and in the judgment of the dead he will be preserved from destruction.[2] In his Introduction, Amen-em-Opet had indicted his possession of a tomb.

It would be inaccurate to argue that, in contrast to the older

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[1] Translation by Griffith, op. cit., p. 206.

[2] Grumach, op. cit., p. 73. The statue of the deceased was often placed in his tomb, in a chamber behind the funerary chapel, or at times in the temple, and it was in the statue that the Ka of a man was believed to take his residence (Morenz, Egyptian Religion, p. 204). Frankfort observes that "a statue, properly identified with the dead man by an inscription and magically animated by the 'opening of the mouth' ceremony, could replace the body if it should be damaged by decay or violence " (Ancient Egyptian Religion, p. 93).

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"secular" wisdom, Amen-em-Opet has yielded to the influence of popular beliefs and local cults, as has been charged,[1] but rather as we have seen in much of the literature of the sages, the wise believed that cult was an important sphere of world order, and therefore cultic devotion should be of concern to the pious scribe. However, once more we find a sage who criticizes foolish, overly zealous cultic participation by the "heated man" who regards cultic participation as a guarantee of divine favor, regardless of the manner of life he leads outside the cultic realm. In contrast, he depicts the discreet behavior of the "silent man" that characterizes his actions even within the sphere of the holy, and it is this behavior that achieves beneficent blessings from the divine, both within the sphere of cultic religion and without.

The Late Dynastic Period and Hellenistic Rule

Introduction. The chain of Egyptian Instructions continued unbroken through the periods of Egyptian History in which she fell victim to the immense power of the Persians throughout the fifth century B.C., and finally to the military power and rule of Alexander

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[1] Griffith, op. cit., p. 230. For a rejection of the idea of older wisdom as secular and profane and later wisdom as more religious and superstitious, see A. De Buck, "Het Religieus Karakter der oudste egyptische Wijsheid," NTT, XXI (1932), 322-49. He states, for example, that both Amen-em-Opet and Ptah-hotep are permeated by a religious spirit: "de gelijkenis in toon en stemming is onmiskenbaar" (p. 339).

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and his Greek successors. First we find "The Instruction of 'Onchsheshonqy" during the period of Persian domination, and then, when the Ptolemies ruled Egypt, "The Instruction of Papyrus Insinger."

The Instruction of 'Onchsheshonqy.[1] Writing during the eclipse of Egyptian civilization and power,[2] a priest of the sun god Re of Heliopolis wrote a rustic Instruction intended primarily for Egyptian peasants of the countryside, and not, like his sapiential predecessors, for officials and courtiers of royal position.[3] The range of the subjects covered involves familial relationships, relationships with friends, neighbors, landlords, as well as material dealing with the conducting and managing of one's affairs and one's religious obligations. Not only do the various items of the Instruction smack of a rural flavor, but, likewise, so do the formal characteristics.[4] First of all, the fact that almost half of the Instruction consists of indicative statements conforming to the form of the popular proverb lends itself to a rural origin. Secondly, the Instruction is marked by an almost complete omission of any extended motivations for observing the admonitions, again indicating a less erudite audience lacking acutely sharpened tools of reason and an investigative spirit, or, in other words, pointing to an audience which would probably accept without hesitancy the admonitions of the sage. If such an audience is provable, we are provided not only with evidence that wisdom teaching eventually penetrated the lower strata of Egyptian society, but, in addition, with material concerning the sapiential instruction for the peasant with respect to his cultic duties.

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[1] The text, transliteration, and translation have been published by S.R.K. Glanville, Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum, Vol. II. The Instructions of 'Onchsheshonqy (London: The British Museum, 1955).

[2] Glanville places the piece in the 5th or 4th century B.C. (op. cit., p. XI), and B. Gemser agrees that the date is not pre-fifth century ("The Instructions of 'Onchsheshonqy and Biblical Wisdom Literature," SVT, VII [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960], p. 106). However, B. H. Sticker places the origin in the Saite Dynasty ("De Wijsheid van Anchsjesjonqy," XV [1933], p. 11).

[3] Glanville, op. cit., p. XIV.

[4] McKane, Proverbs, p. 122; and Gemser, op. cit., p. 115.

Cultic participation by the peasant is important as the following admonition demonstrates:

> Make sacrifice and libation before God,
> And let the fear of him be great in your heart (Col. 14, l. 10).

The motivation for cultic involvement is, of course, projected upon the belief that such activity results in the evoking of divine favor:

> Serve[1] your God(?) that he may protect you (Col. 6, l.1).
>
> Wealth is perfected in the service of God,
> The one who causes (it) to happen (Col. 18, l. 17).
>
> The master's favourite will act the master,
> if the household do not worship before God (Col. 19, l. 14).

Besides sacrifice, prayer is also presented as an important act of

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[1] Glanville believes that the word *šms* may indicate 'worship' in this context (*op. cit.*, p. 70, footnote 76).

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piety to the sage who insists that persistence in prayer will eventually be rewarded:

> Do not be weary of crying to God,
> for he has his hour for hearing the scribe (Col. 28, l. 10).

Like many of his sapiential ancestors, 'Onchsheshonqy also demonstrates a funerary concern, for he urges his adherents to be concerned with mortuary perparations, even before the threat of death is imminent:

> Do not delay to get yourself a tomb on the hill;
> You do not know the length of your life (Col. 12, l. 5).

Finally, the sage is a loyalist to the priestly clerics, for he notes that "the blessing of a temple is a priest" (Col. 8, l. 18), but he does issue the dire warning to the chief priest against being negligent in his duties:

> Bread is given to the chief priest in return for his intercession;
> If he does not intercede he is slain (Col. 24, l. 11).

Though our sage does not engage in any outspoken critique of cult, he, like many of his sapiential predecessors, does share the view that the cult is most certainly an important area of world order, and therefore should receive due attention from those who desire to integrate themselves within the beneficent spheres of world order.

The Instruction of the Papyrus Insinger.[1] An anonymous sage of the

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[1] For the transcription and translation of Papyrus Insinger, see P. A. A. Boeser, Transkription und Übersetzung des Papyrus Insinger, Oudheidkundige Mededeelingen, III (Uit 'Srijksmuseum van Oudheden Te Leiden, 1922). In addition, Volten has translated the Papyrus Carlsburg which contains the same contents as Papyrus Insinger, and he compares

Ptolemaic period was responsible for the compilation of our final Egyptian Instruction, and once more we are provided with material supporting the contention that the Egyptian wise were concerned with cult as an important sphere of world order.

The key concept of this instruction around which the admonitions and proverbs are centered is the idea of *Gleichgewicht* (*p3 dnf*), "balance, equilibrium," which is the guiding principle of world order, and therefore of orderly human activity. And though the deity may be inscrutable, beyond the ken of human knowledge and understanding, our sage never allows himself to question the justice of this deity, even though experience may not always support a rigid scheme of retribution at first glance, and he continues to adhere to the ethical standard of *Gleichgewicht* for every human activity.[1]

In the realm of cultic participation, the sage gives cult its due, for, though the deity is inscrutable in his ways, he continues to bless those who are cultically observant:

> 10:1 (Denn Gott) hilft dem weisen Manne, weil er (ihm) dient.[2]
> 29:1 Wer seinen Gott morgens in seiner Staat anbetet, der
> wird leben.
> 29:2 Wer seinen (d.h. Gottes) Namen in seinem Munde führt
> während des Unglücks, wird daraus errettet.[3]

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the two texts in chapters One and Two (*Das Demotische Weisheitsbuch* [Kopenhagen: Einar Munksgaard, 1941]).

[1] "Das Glecichgewicht...ist das Prinzip der ganzen Weltordnung" (Volten, *op. cit.*, p. 128).

[2] All of the quotations are from Volten's translation.

[3] Another interesting point concerning prayer and theology is made in the warning intimated in 28,15. One who is "far away" (presumably in another country) finds to his dismay that his gods and

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The sage is also a supporter of the mortuary cult and admonishes his followers, even though their fate and fortune is completely determined by the deity, to make the proper preparations for burial:

> 2:9 Vergiss (aber) das Begräbnis nicht, sei nicht lässig in den (Ehren), die Gott befiehlt.
> 2:10 Das Begräbnis ist in der Hand Gottes, (aber) der Weise Mann trägt dafür Sorge.

In fact God's reward for those who fear him is a grave:

> 2:11 Gottes Gnade für den Gottesfürchtigen ist sein Begräbnis und seine Ruhestätte.

A most interesting social cast is given to the sacrificial cult, and in this way the text is most similar to a contemporary Hebrew sage, Sirach. Not only is god pleased by offerings, but in this manner one is able to support the poor who are dependent upon the offerings for sustenance.

> 16:4 Hast du Besitz, dann gib einen Teil Gott, das ist der der Armen.
> 16:1 Brandopfer und Trankopfer sind nützlich wegen der Berwirtung (C.V, d,l:(um) einer Anderen zu bewirten).
> 16:2 Ein Begräbnis ist nützlich, weil man dort bewirtet.

Such a social concern for the poor and the usage of sacrificial offerings for their sustenance is given the stamp of divine authority:

> 16:3 Denn das Herz Gottes wird zufrieden, wenn der Arme vor ihm gesättigt wird.

Thus it becomes obvious that our sage is equally concerned with cultic observance, but his unique contribution is the social concern

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his prayer are likewise "far away," suggesting that travel to foreign destinations is made hazardous by the absence of one's gods.

which he demonstrates and to which he appeals in regard to the offering of sacrifices and gifts to the cult, for such may be used not only for the support of the priests who at times of hardship and religious laxness suffered severely, but also for the socially deprived as well.

Conclusions

On the basis of the above investigation, it becomes obvious that the sphere of cult was of considerable concern to the wise of ancient Egypt. While references to the cult during the period of the Old Kingdom are relatively infrequent, the advocacy of the importance of mortuary religion and service to the divine pharaoh is found in Old Kingdom wisdom literature. Furthermore, Schmid's contention that the attacks against Egyptian cults made by the critical wise of the First Intermediate Period are understandable only if their predecessors had provided sapiential support for the ancient cults of Egypt seems to us a most plausible suggestion.

With the eruption of the volcanic conditions of the First Intermediate Period, the Egyptian sages were divided into two antagonistic camps in their analyses of cultic religion. The critical wise attacked the validity of mortuary religion and service to the divine king, while the pious wise asserted the importance of the Egyptian cults in efforts to re-establish the beneficent orders of the Egyptian state. Even so, the critical strain of Egyptian wisdom continued into later periods as is evidenced by the sapiential "In Praise of Learned Scribes" which continues to castigate the failures of mortuary religion.

The texts dating from the Middle Kingdom take on an especially propagandistic character as loyal support of the scribal officials is urged by the sages of the court, and this flows over into the area of cultic religion as well, since the support of the divine pharaoh in loyal service brings the sage not only advancement in the scribal ranks, but the blessing of a tomb for continuance into the future life by means of mortuary religion.

The New Kingdom texts, with the noted exception of "In Praise of Learned Scribes," continue the sapiential support of the validity of mortuary religion and urge their recipients to participate in the temple cults of Egypt. However, new emphases are placed on the behavior of the wise in the sphere of the cult, for the pious sage is to be characterized in his cultic behavior by the decorum of the "silent man," and not by the garrulous activities of the "heated man."

The Late Dynastic and Hellenistic texts point to the continuing emphasis of the wise on the importance of cultic religion, as these texts admonish their adherents to continue to support the Egyptian cults and to be concerned with the preparations of mortuary religion.

Throughout the history of Egyptian wisdom literature, it is apparent that, except for periods of disruption and despair, the wise placed their support behind the varieties of Egyptian cultic religion, believing that the Egyptian cults aided in the processes of securing and maintaining beneficent order for the Egyptian state and the sagacious individual. This belief, expressed most often in the general categories of retributive blessing and destruction, was the primary motivation for active participation by the wise in cultic religion.

Finally, present within the Egyptian wisdom texts are a number of developed units of didactic poetry, including some which are quite similar to cultic psalms. This indicates that the wise participated in the writing of didactic poetry, including genres similar to cultic psalms, a point to which we shall return in Chapter V when we investigate Hebrew wisdom psalms.

CHAPTER III

THE VIEWS OF CULT IN MESOPOTAMIAN WISDOM LITERATURE

A. The World View of Mesopotamian Wisdom Literature

Before turning directly to the task of delineating and analyzing the views of cult in the Mesopotamian Wisdom Literature, a succinct summary of the world view of the Mesopotamian sages will serve as an introduction.[1]

Wisdom and the Cosmos. In the myth of "Inanna and Enki: The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech,"[2] one finds listed on four occasions over one hundred elements of creation, each of which was constituted and regulated by a me, best regarded as a cosmic law which, acting in concert with the other cosmic laws, provided the force which originates, integrates, and regulates a particular element of the natural and societal spheres of world order.[3]

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[1] A brief historical survey of wisdom thought and literature is found in W. G. Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom Literature (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 1-20.

[2] Translated by S. N. Kramer in Sumerian Mythology, Rev. Ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), pp. 64ff.

[3] The Akkadian equivalents for me are parṣu, mešaru, and kettu (cf. E. I. Gordon, Sumerian Proverbs (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania, 1959), p. 309; E. A. Speiser, "Authority and Law in Mesopotamia," Authority and Law in the Ancient Orient, JAOS Supplement, XVII (1954), 12; and Helmer Ringgren, Word and Wisdom (Lund: Hakan Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1947), pp. 53f.).

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> The Sumerian theologians adduced what was for them a satisfying metaphysical inference to explain what kept the cosmic entities and cultural phenomena, once created, operating continuously and harmoniously without conflict and confusion; this was the concept designated by the Sumerian word *me*, the exact meaning of which is still uncertain. In general, it would seem to denote a set of rules and regulations assigned to each cosmic entity and cultural phenomenon for the purpose of keeping it operating forever in accordance with the plans laid down by the deity creating it.[1]

Since these cosmic laws were considered to have originated at the time of creation and became, as it were, the glue which held together the various elements of nature, civilization, and society in an eternal continuum, the purpose and function of wisdom was not only to reflect these cosmic laws in ideology and practice, but, at the same time, was to maintain and actually promote these divinely ordained laws, and thereby maintain and promote the harmony of the universe, the gifts of civilization, and the institutions of society, all of which were established by the gods.

The sages of ancient Mesopotamia shared the mythological emphasis placed on world order, and considered it their primary duty to observe its cosmic laws and to translate them into the language of the various sapiential genres, oral as well as written, which then could be used as instructive guidance for the orientation of the wise man's life within the spheres of world order so that he might come within the beneficent powers of the cosmos, and consequently

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[1] S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 116.

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experience the rewards of a life spent in harmony with the universe. Such an understanding is succinctly stated in the following proverb: "Whoever has walked with truth generates life" (1.1).[1]

Wisdom, also an element of civilization governed by its own me according to the myth of "Inanna and Enki," was considered to be of divine origin and was given by the gods to enable the sage to observe world order and the rules which governed the cosmos, to incorporate them within the wisdom sayings, to live according to the sapiential precepts, and to integrate his life within the beneficent spheres of world order established and regulated by the gods.

The Mesopotamian sages proceeded to build upon this concept of world order a structure of retribution whereby various gods were believed to oversee the smooth functioning of the spheres of world order to ensure that the harmony of the integrated mes was maintained.[2] Thus the righteous wise who observed and followed the cosmic and societal laws were rewarded, but the foolish wicked who perverted the eternal orders were punished and destroyed. Success or failure, life or death, depended upon the following of the cosmic rules of nature, civilization, and society. Since the cosmic laws originated with the gods and must be maintained and followed for the preservation of order, sin was viewed as the transgression of these divine laws and the failure to carry out the responsibility of maintaining the divine order, such as a king's arbitrarily robbing his own people or his failure to establish a just judiciary. Such a system of retribution involved the belief that a particular action or thought led to a prescribed result, though it was not automatic or self-governing, but rather was directed by various gods consigned the duty of overseeing the integrity of the system. A typical example of retribution is found in the "Counsels of Wisdom" and concerns the responsibility of individuals to provide for the poor:

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[1] Gordon, Sumerian Proverbs, p. 41. Gordon suggests concerning the proverb: "That is, perhaps, a man who lives in accord with the universally recognized 'cosmic and immutable truths' will be able to obtain for himself all the good things in life." Cf. "The Babylonian Theodicy," l. 142 (BWL, p. 73); and "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom," Tab. II, l. 29 (BWL, p. 41).

[2] This is argued throughout "The Advice to a Prince," BWL, pp. 110-15. Also compare the Sumerian proverb: "A boat bent on honest pursuits sailed downstream with the wind; Utu has sought out honest ports for it" (l. 8, Sumerian Proverbs, p. 84).

> Give food to eat, give date wine to drink;
> Grant what is asked, provide for and honour.
> In this a man's god takes pleasure,
> It is pleasing to Shamash, who will repay him with
> favour (ll. 61-64).[1]

The arguments of the Friend in "The Babylonian Theodicy" share this understanding:

> The rogue who has acquired wealth (in a manner) which is
> against the will of the gods is persecuted by a murderer's
> weapon.
> Unless you seek the will of the god, what success can you
> have? (ll. 237f.)[2]

Of course, the sages of Mesopotamia were deeply disturbed by

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[1] BWL, p. 103.

[2] ANET, p. 603.

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the breakdown of world order and the integrally connected failure of the system of retribution, so painfully obvious during times of national, natural, and even personal disasters which were exceedingly difficult to explain on the premise of some retributory system. Several approaches were offered. First the difficulty was often placed at the feet of the gods who were held responsible for creating evil, acting wickedly and capriciously, or at best were deemed inscrutable. In the myth concerning Inanna and Enki, there were mes to govern 'falsehood,' 'strife,' 'fear,' etc.,[1] thus implying that the gods were responsible for the operation and regulation of evil and that destruction and evil were made a part of the created order. A congruent idea was advocated by the Friend in "The Babylonian Theodicy" who argued that the gods made men evil by nature, and therein was the answer for humanity's wicked behavior.

> Narru, king of the gods, who created mankind,
> And majestic Zulummar, who dug out their clay,
> And mistress Mami, the queen who fashioned them,
> Gave perverse speech to the human race.
> With lies, and not truth, they endowed them for ever. (ll. 276-280).[2]

In times of despair the gods themselves were considered to act wickedly and capriciously whether it be in the destruction of mankind for disturbing their restful peace,[3] or in their collusion with the wicked

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[1] Kramer, The Sumerians, p. 125.

[2] BWL, p. 89.

[3] "The Atrahasis Epic," ANET, p. 104.

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designs of evil men. Such is charged by the complainant in "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom":

> My slanderer slanders with god's help;
> For the...who says, "God bless you,"
> death comes at the gallop.
> While he who utters a libellous cry is
> sustained by his guardian spirit. (ll. 95-97).

Others concluded that the gods and their will are inscrutable, and, therefore, have left man in the dark recesses of an unenlightened spirit, not knowing whether his actions will result in blessing or destruction at the hands of the gods:[1]

> What is proper to oneself is an offence to one's god;
> What in one's own heart seems despicable is proper to
> one's god.
> Who knows the will of the gods in heaven?
> Who understands the plans of the underworld gods?
> Where have mortals learnt the way of a god? (Tablet I,
> ll. 34-38).[2]

Another explanation was that man had no intuitive sense of sin, and thus was unable to know whether his actions were wicked or righteous:

> Mankind is deaf and knows nothing.
> What knowledge has anyone at all?
> He knows not whether he has done a good or a bad deed.[3]

And finally, the denial of a universe permeated by order and ruled according to the rule of just retribution is presented in the "Dialogue of Pessimism."[1]

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[1] BWL, p. 35.

[2] Cf. the time honored proverb quoted in the Sumerian Job: "They say--the sages--a word righteous (and) straightforward: Never has a sinless child been born to its mother,...a sinless workman has not existed from of old." (ll. 101f.; ANET, p. 590).

[3] OECT, CI.43. Translated by Lambert, BWL, p. 16.

Wisdom and the Gods.[2] As mentioned above, the gods were believed responsible for the establishment of world order as part of the creative process by the originating of various mes, and for the maintenance of world order by means of overseeing a system of retribution, established in order to assure the harmonious functioning of the various spheres of world order (nature, society, and civilization). Generally speaking, the sages viewed the gods as just and moral; especially is this true of the Babylonian wise. However, during periods of disaster, this moral and ethical character of the gods was questioned and at times even blasphemously denied. The responsibility for the continuation of world order according to a system of just rewards and punishments is most noticeable in the "Advice to a Prince":

> If he (i.e. the prince) does not heed the justice of his land, Ea, king of destinies will alter his destiny and will not cease from hostilely pursuing him (ll. 2-3).[3]

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[1] BWL, pp. 139-40, especially ll. 70f. For an incisive discussion of the questioning of the justice of god, see Wolfram von Soden, "Das Fragen nach der Gerechtigkeit Gottes im Alten Orient," MDOG, XCVI (1965), 41-59.

[2] As we have noticed in Egyptian Wisdom Literature, the Mesopotamian wise also often refer to deity by using the generic term 'god' (Sumerian dingir, Akk. ilu), and when an individual deity, he is usually the god of justice, the sun god (Utu, Shamash).

[3] BWL, pp. 112-115. The crediting of the gods with high moral qualities can be traced back to Sumerian theology as Kramer (The Sumerians, p. 123) and H. Ringgren (Religions of the Ancient Near East (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973), p. 51) argue.

The one deity usually singled out as the one who oversees the sphere of just retribution is the sun god (Akk. Shamash; Sumerian Utu).

> Do not slander, speak what is fine.
> Speak no evil, tell what is good.
> Whoever slanders (or) speaks evil,
> As a retribution the god Shamash will pursue after his head.[1]

In their conception of the gods, the wise considered a number of deities to be the gods of wisdom, though it was primarily Enki (Akk. Ea) who, as the god of wisdom, ordered the world in creation according to the designs of his wisdom, presented to mankind the gifts of artistic skills and handicrafts, and provided man with divine wisdom so that the laws of world order could be observed and the spheres of world order maintained.[2] The other gods of wisdom most often mentioned are Nisaba, the mistress of scribal writing, and Nabu, who as the divine scribe was the patron deity of the scribal profession.[3]

Believing that the great gods, like their earthly counterparts the king and the ruling house, were too preoccupied with important matters to be overly concerned with the petty needs of individuals, the Mesopotamian savants projected the idea of a personal deity, usually a minor god, who, as the center of individual devotion, provided safety and protection against the demonic forces and evil magicians, believed to be possessors of powers to afflict one with suffering and even death.[1] Thus finding himself in dire distress, the individual could appeal to his personal deity who would intercede on his behalf before the great gods. Such a personal deity is frequently mentioned in the wisdom literature. For example the sufferer in "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom" bemoans his wretched condition in terms of the abandonment of his personal deity:

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[1] "The Shamash Hymn," BWL, pp. 121-138.

[2] Ringgren, Religions of the Ancient Near East, p. 8.

[3] Cf. Bruno Meissner, Babylonien und Assyrien, II (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1925), 324.

> My god has forsaken me and disappeared,
> My goddess has failed me and keeps at a distance.
> The benevolent angel who (walked) beside me has departed,
> My protecting spirit has taken to flight, and is seeking someone else. (Tablet I, ll. 43-46).[2]

Subsequently, the demonic forces are given free reign to afflict the lamentor. Only the inducement of the deity's return will result in the sufferer's restoration to health and prosperity.[3]

Wisdom and the King. According to Mesopotamian literature, society, its political and social institutions, was ordained by the gods as a major sphere of world order, and consequently was regulated by societal *mes*.[4] As such, the society of the Mesopotamians was regarded as the microcosm of world order, and the responsibility for the maintenance of societal order was given to the royal institution. In fact kingship, itself ordained and governed by a number of *mes*, was considered to have been "lowered from heaven" for the specific purpose of maintaining order in Mesopotamian society.[1] Individual kings proclaim the contention that they were specifically selected by the high god to rule and to maintain order within the state as his unique representative.[2] In a song to An which included a Prayer for Lipit-Ishtar, the following occurs:

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[1] Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs*, p. 307.

[2] *BWL*, p. 33.

[3] Cf. the Sumerian "Man and His God," *ANET*, pp. 589-91; and "The Babylonian Theodicy," *BWL*, pp. 71f.

[4] Kramer, *The Sumerians*, p. 116.

> Höchster Herr, allen vorangehend,
> der die vollkommenen me gewaltig gemacht hat,
> ältester der Herren!
> Alle me hat er (An) strahlend erscheinen lassen--
> die Götter des Himmels sind (darob) zu ihm gegangen.
> Des (Himmels) Regeln hat er recht gefügt--
> im Himmel und auf Erden beugt sich ihm jeder.
> In höchstem me, in...,
> hat das Königtum, das teure,
> Lipitištar, Enlils Sohn,
> der grosse An zum Geschenk gemacht.
> An ist gross, der strahlend erscheinende Gott ist gross--
> des gewaltigen An Stütze ist König Lipitištar.[3]

The kings are thus chosen by the gods to establish and maintain the societal sphere of world order in the areas of warfare, legal justice, and cult, with the result being that of procuring for the state victory in warfare, peace, and a prosperity usually described in terms of the fructification of nature.[1] The ability to accomplish such beneficent results was credited to their reception of the gift of divine wisdom.[2] In fact certain kings even extended their claim to divine wisdom to include initiation within the scribal crafts, and, as such, were the patrons of the wise and their literature. Ashurbanipal, the founder of the famous library of Nineveh, proclaims in a self-exaltation:

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[1] "The Sumerian King List," *ANET*, p. 264; and "Etana," *ANET*, p. 114.

[2] Schmid, *Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung*, pp. 24-28.

[3] *SAHG*, Nr. 20, pp. 102-5. Schmid comments concerning this list: "Damit vereint der König alle me in sich, er hat die me von Himmel und Erde inne, er thront in hohem me und vollzieht sie " (*Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung*, p. 65).

> I, Ashurbanipal, laid hold upon the wisdom of Nabu, penetrated into all (the intricacies) of the art of writing, as practiced by all kinds of craftsmen...[3]

Wisdom and Mankind. The insecurity of the human condition pervades the spirit of Mesopotamian literature in general, an insecurity due to many different historical, geographical, and existential factors. The tumultuous course of Mesopotamian history certainly yielded itself to this deep sense of insecurity, as did geographical conditions such as the turbulent character of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and the easy accessibility of the area to invaders. The vulnerability of human life to the ravages of death in its many forms--disease, famine, warfare--contributed to the agonizing realization of the dreadful dilemma of human existence. This insecurity is reflected in the thoughts of the wise including the beliefs that death was the inescapable lot of mankind,[1] that the nether world was a wretched and dreadful abode of the dead, that the gods were at times inscrutable[2] and capricious deities who could bring suffering and destruction at any time,[3] that the powers of demons and evil magicians were ever present to afflict the living,[4] that the gods determined the fate of man who

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[1] The most detailed wisdom text dealing with the responsibilities of the king in terms of societal justice is "Advice to a Prince," BWL, pp. 110-115. Other sapiential texts point to a similar conviction:

> The opulent nouveau riche who heaps up goods
> Will be burnt at the stake by the king before his time
> ("Babylonian Theodicy,", BWL, p. 75, ll. 63-64).
> The command of the palace, like Anu's is sure.
> Like Shamash, the king loves righteousness and hates evil.
> (ll. 4-5, K4160+13184; BWL, p. 234).

Cf. ll. 1-3, K4160+13184, BWL, p. 234; "The Assyrian Collection," iv, 9-16, BWL, p. 232.

[2] Shulgi makes the claims: "Endowed with wisdom by Enki am I," and "The wise scribe of Nidada am I" (ll. 12, 19; "The Shulgi Hymn," ANET, p. 585).

[3] D. D. Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia

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(Chicago, 1926-27), no. 767. See the references mentioned in Adam Falkenstein, "Der 'Sohn des Tafelhaus'," Die Welt des Orients, I (1947), 172f.

[1] The well known speech of the ale-wife, Siduri, poignantly expresses this divinely determined fate of mankind:

Gilgamesh, whither rovest thou?
The life thou pursuest thou shalt not find.
When the gods created mankind,
Death for mankind they set aside,
Life in their own hands retaining (Tablet X, Old Babylonian Version, ll. 1f.; ANET, p. 90).

Cf. "The Babylonian Theodicy," ll. 16-17, BWL, p. 71; and "Counsels of a Pessimist," BWL, p. 109, ll. 9f.

[2] See Prov. 1. 30, 1. 38, 1. 183 (Gordon, Sumerian Proverbs, p. 309).

[3] See "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom," Tablet II, ll. 33f.

[4] See "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom," BWL, p. 41, Tablet II, ll. 50f.

was subsequently unable to alter it,[1] and that man was often unable to ascertain his sin and thus incapable of rectifying the situation and of saving himself from destruction.[2]

Even though the limitations and uncertainty of human existence were well recognized and often bemoaned by the wise, nevertheless, the quest for at least a restricted certainty was undertaken. Affirming that the world was constituted by a system of world-order regulated by a complex of integrated cosmic laws, the wise ascribed to the belief that the ultimate purpose of human activity and behavior was to reflect these eternal dictates. By successfully integrating himself within the beneficent spheres of world order, the wise man could expectantly hope for success, prosperity, and even longevity. Thus wisdom was seen as providing a limited measure of certainty in a very insecure world, and the wise devoted themselves to its articulation and to a dedicated devotion to its observations and dictates. Only the fool gave no concern to the divinely constituted structure of world order, disregarded the seriousness of obeying its cosmic rules and the sapiential sayings incorporating these rules, and consequently met swift destruction.[3]

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[1] See e.g., "The Babylonian Theodicy," BWL, p. 87, ll. 260f.

[2] BWL, p. 16.

[3] Cf. "The Shamash Hymn," BWL, pp. 121-38.

In their quest for security in human existence, the wise recognized the limitations of wisdom based on reason and experience, and often sought out the wise cultist and magician whose revealed insights into the mystery of human existence and the will of the gods could further one's attempts to find a secure existence. The wise shared the idea that security in life was impossible apart from giving consideration to the will and the needs of the gods, for was not the purpose of the creation of mankind by the gods to faithfully execute the cultic demands made by the gods in order to have their needs provided for?[1] And through such cultic observances, especially to one's protective deity and his consort, one could at least hope for the divine favor.[2] Thus the Friend in the "Babylonian Theodicy" argued a commonly accepted sapiential observation:

> He who waits on his god has a protecting angel.
> The humble man who fears his goddess accumulates wealth.
> (ll. 21-22).
> Seek the kindly wind of the god,
> What you have lost over a year you will make up in a moment.
> (ll. 241-42).[3]

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[1] See "The Creation Myth," ANET, p. 68, Tablet VI. Marduk proclaims:

> Blood I will mass and cause bones to be.
> I will establish a savage, man shall be his name.
> Verily, savage-man I will create.
> He shall be charged with the service of the gods
> That they might be at ease.

[2] Lambert cogently argues: "There was no distinction, such as we tend to make, between morally right and mutually proper. The god was just as angry with the eating of ritually impure food as with oppressing the widow and orphan. His anger would be appeased no less with the ritual offering than with a reformed life " ("Morals in Ancient Mesopotamia," JEOL, XV (1957/58), p. 194.

[3] BWL, pp. 71, 85.

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And the "Counsels of Wisdom" adds: "Sacrifice prolongs life," and "He who fears the Anunnaki extends (his days)" (ll. 144-147).[1] Failure to care for the needs of the gods through the offerings of sacrifices and gifts led to suffering and death. The sufferer in "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom" protests that he is suffering "like one who has not made libations to his god, nor invoked his goddess at table." (Tablet II, ll. 12-13).[2] Even magic was resorted to during times of distress which were attributed to the actions of demons, as evidenced by the same sufferer who turns to diviners to determine the reasons for his plight so that rectification of his situation might be initiated (Tablet II, ll. 50f., 108f.).[3]

Wisdom and the Sages. The wise of ancient Mesopotamia were primarily scribes who functioned within the service of the two great social and economic institutions of Mesopotamian society: the palace and the temple, and ranked in importance from minor scribes with perfunctory and minor duties to officals of great importance such as royal counsellors or the king's secretary, thus exercising tremendous positions of power. Training for scribal service was provided in the scribal schools attached to the palaces and temples throughout Mesopotamia which not only provided the young sages considerable expertise in the carrying out of the economic, administrative, and bureaucratic tasks of the palace and temple, but also became centers of the creation and transmission of Mesopotamian culture, including, of course, wisdom literature. Most students who passed through these schools proceeded into careers as scribes, officials, and bureaucrats of the palace, temple, and large aristocratic estates, but a few became teachers and scholars who continued to function within the sphere of the school.[1]

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[1] BWL, p. 105.

[2] BWL, p. 39.

[3] BWL, pp. 41, 45.

The wisdom literature was then the promulgation of the sages functioning within the wisdom schools, and included the following sapiential genres: proverbs, fables and parables, folk-tales, miniature essays, riddles, Edubba compositions, wisdom disputations, practical instructions, satirical dialogues, precepts, and "righteous sufferer" poems.[2] It is an accepted point of modern scholarship that such were written in order to incorporate the observations of the wise concerning the salient features of world order and were taught to successive generations of scribal aspirants not only for the purpose of teaching the technical scribal crafts of reading, writing, and literary creativity, but even more importantly, to demonstrate the proper direction of life and the correct orientation of a wise man to the spheres of world order which were controlled by the eternal *mes* with the result that the young scribe would attune himself to the harmony of world order and discover a successful, rewarding, and extended life. Every conceivable area of nature, existence, civilization, and society was subjected to sapiential scrutiny and interpretation, for each was considered to be constituted by the eternal dictates established by the gods, and through the appropriation of wisdom these laws could be discovered and placed within the conceptual categories of sapiential thought.

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[1] For studies on scribes and scribal schools, one should see Bruno Meissner, op. cit., pp. 324f.; A. Leo Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1964), pp. 235f.; "The Position of the Intellectual in Mesopotamian Society," Daedalus, CIV (1975), 37-46; Kramer, The Sumerians, pp. 165-248; "Schooldays: A Sumerian Composition Relating to the Education of the Scribe," JAOS, LXIX (1949), 199-215; Benno Landsberger, "Scribal Concepts of Education," City Invincible (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 94-123; Adam Falkenstein, "Die babylonische Schule," Saeculum, IV (1953), 125-37; B. Landsberger, "Babylonian Scribal Craft and its Terminology," Abstract in The Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Orientalists (Cambridge, 1954), pp. 123-26; W. G. Lambert, "Ancestors, Authors, and Canonicity," JCS, XI (1957), 1-14; Harmut Schmökel, Das Land Sumer. 3rd. ed. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1962), pp. 96f.; and J. J. A. van Dijk, La sagesse suméro-accadienne (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1953), pp. 21-28.

[2] Those listed by Gordon, "A New Look at the Wisdom of Sumer and Akkad," BiOr, XVII (1960), 122-52.

The sapiential concern to analyze and describe the tenets of world order can best be explained in terms of how the sage conceived himself as a wise man. Ideally speaking, the sage, first of all, conceived himself to be a functional extension of the royal institution, and thus it was his task to contribute to the royal task of establishing and maintaining cosmic and societal order, whether he served as a scribe, lawyer, court historian, architect, priest, or sheep counter. Thus the royal tasks of promulgating law-codes, maintaining and regulating cultic temples and rituals, training and leading into battle the cohorts of soldiers were delegated to and carried out by the total

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hierarchy of scribaldom which considered itself as the functional extension of the royal task of creating and maintaining societal order. Such royal service elicited from the wise exclamation of the majesty and greatness of the king who established and maintained the microcosm of world order.[1] Yet the sage also conceived of himself as the functional extension of the gods of wisdom and order who established and supervised the continuance of the complex of the mes. Therefore the sages were considered to be the recipient of a divine commission to aid the gods in the maintenance of world order by means of their specific professions, their literary activities which sought to harness the power of the dictates of cosmic order, and their own sagacious behavior in every sphere of human existence. To enable them to achieve their task, they were equipped with divine wisdom by the gods of wisdom.[2]

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[1] See the references mentioned in Falkenstein, "Der 'Sohn des Tafelhaus'," pp. 172f. For example, in the Lipitishtar Hymn (TCT, XVI 87 VI 5-7): "Deinen Lobpreis möge er (=der Tafelschreiber) im Tafelhaus nicht enden lassen"! (Ibid., 185f.).

[2] See the schoolboy text translated by Kramer ("Schooldays: A Sumerian Composition Relating to the Education of a Scribe," ll. 74f.) in which the teacher says to his scribal protégé:

May Nidaba, the queen of the guardian deities, be your
guardian deity.
May she show favor to your fashioned reed.
May she take all evil from your hand-copies.
....
I will give speech to you, will decree (your fate).
Verily your father and (mother) will support you in this matter,
As (that) which is Nidaba's, as that which is thy god's,
They will present offerings and prayers to her.
Nidaba, the queen of the place of learning, you have exalted.
O Nidaba praise!

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B. The Views of Cult in Mesopotamian Wisdom Literature

Having surveyed the basic ideas of the sages in Mesopotamia, especially the view that world order is permeated by a complex of cosmic, societal, and cultural laws, it becomes our task to determine whether or not these sages demonstrated a concern for the realm of the cult and its rituals and laws. In other words did the sages view cult as an important area of world order which necessitated sapiential observation and participation, or was this an area left to the priests, whereas the sages were content to concern themselves only with the secular spheres of existence and reality?

Sumerian Wisdom Literature

The Sumerian "Man and his God."[1] Writing perhaps as early as the Third Dynasty of Ur (2,000 B.C.),[2] a sumerian sage of the Edubba wrote a reflective discourse concerning a young sumerian wise man who, in spite of his own wisdom and righteousness, underwent the excruciation and inexplicable trauma of emotional and physical suffering which included the contempt of his fellow Sumerians, the demonic attack of his body in the forms of physical torment and disease, and the displeasure of his ruler, all of which were believed occasioned by the abandonment of the youth by his personal deity, thus exposing him to the onslaught of these misfortunes.[1] The major thesis of the poem has been succinctly described by Kramer:

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[1] For the translation, see ANET, pp. 589-91.

[2] S. N. Kramer, "Man and his God," SVT, III (1955), p. 170.

> The main thesis of our poet is that in cases of suffering and adversity, no matter how seemingly unjustified, the victim has but one valid and effective recourse, and that is to glorify his god continually, and keep waiting before him until he turns a favorable ear to his prayers.[2]

Throughout the poem the sage, speaking in the first person, continues to assert that he is wise and righteous:

> The young man--he uses not his strength for evil in the place of deceit, (l. 10)
> I, the wise, why am I bound to the ignorant youths?
> I, the discerning, why am I counted among the ignorant?
> (ll. 42f.).

As the poet develops the thesis of the poem, he suggests a number of reasons as to why the youth may be suffering. First, the youth points the finger of accusation towards his personal deity whose abandonment has provoked the misfortune and suffering he was experiencing, and though the deity's justice is never attacked directly, the youth makes implicit his blame of the deity[3] as being responsible for his current state of suffering:

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[1] The poem has been classified as a "righteous sufferer" poem in regard to content (Gordon, "A New Look at the Wisdom of Sumer and Akkad," p. 149). We would prefer to use the classification "A Reflective Poem Concerning the Lament" or Gese's "Paradigm of an Answered Lament," (Lehre und Wirklichkeit in der alten Weisheit (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1958), for the poem reflects over the thought of the cultic lament, and is similar to the structure of the lament (see SAHG, pp. 183f.).

[2] S. N. Kramer, From the Tablets of Sumer (Indian Hills, Colorado: Falcon's Wing Press, 1956), p. 148.

[3] "The god concerned is the sufferer's 'personal' god.

> You have doled out to me suffering ever anew, (l. 30)
> ....
> The man of deceit has conspired against me,
> (And) you, my god, do not thwart him,
> You carry off my understanding.
> The wicked has conspired against me
> Angered you, stormed about, planned evil. (ll. 38f.).

Such a questioning of the deity's failure to destroy the wicked does not come forth from an alienated spirit, for the youth continues to lament to his deity to deliver him from his distress. He further advocates the generally accepted idea concerning fate, that perhaps his suffering has been decreed by the gods as part of his fate: "On the day shares were allotted to all, my allotted share was suffering." (l. 45). Finally, the common dogma that suffering results because all men are evil by nature is proposed:

> They say--the sages--a word righteous (and) straightforward:
> "Never has a sinless child been born to its mother,
> ...a sinless workman has not existed from of old." (l. 101f.).

Therefore the sage cannot be truly a "righteous sufferer," for all men are created by nature to be wicked, and thus deserve punishment from the gods. The question as to why the gods created man to be evil by nature is never raised, nor are the gods attacked for having made man evil. But most important for our own investigation is the observation that should be made: the poem is a reflection over the lament process in which a sage wonders, questions, and searches for answers to his problems from the grab-bag of theological acumen, but finds his only answer in the continuing efforts to lament his plight before his personal deity in the hopes that the god would have his inexplicably aroused anger soothed and would eventually correct his situation. And this is exactly what happens:

> The man--his bitter weeping was heard by his god,
> When the lamentation and wailing that filled him had
> soothed the heart of his god for the young man,
> The righteous words, the artless words uttered by him,
> his god accepted,
> The words which the young man prayerfully confessed,
> Pleased the..., the flesh of his god, (and) his god
> withdrew his hand from the evil word,
> ....
> He turned the you(ng m)an's suffering into joy(ll. 117f.).

Thus it is through the offering of prayer that the young man is eventually rescued by his deity, an obvious cultic ritual and theological understanding.[1]

Sumerian Proverbs. The Sumerian proverbs have been critically investigated by Gordon and Jacobsen[2] who have provided translations of two collections of proverbs, most of which originated in the scribal quarter of Nippur during the Old Babylonian Period.[3] Gordon has argued that the proverbs were collected for use in the *Edubba*,[4] and one may well imagine that they were used in teaching the language, thought, and proverbial forms of the Sumerian sages to scribal initiates. As one might expect, the proverbs cover a broad

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[1] As we shall see in Chapters IV and V, the traditional wise in Israel were also involved in writing reflective poems concerning the lament (cf. the opponents of Job and Psalm 73).

[2] E. I. Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs*(Philadelphia: The University Museum, 1959). Jacobsen's materials are found in the same book, pp. 447-487.

[3] Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs*, pp. 3, 23, 24.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 18.

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range of topics,[1] but, because of the limitations inherent in this rather truncated sapiential form, it proves difficult to elicit any detailed information from them with respect to observing attitudes and concepts of the Sumerian wise. These proverbs prove to be of only limited value with respect to our investigation, since one finds only scattered references to matters of cult, most of which bear out Gordon's observation that such references "are almost entirely incidental."[2] The only proverb which might be indicative of the importance of cult is 1.70:

> (The people of) a city--their hymns; a kid--its (being used for purposes of) extispicy.[3]

Such a proverb may imply that ingrained within the order of the cosmos is the law that a society structured in the form of a city-state has the duty of cultic service to its gods, the owners and protectors of the city-state, even as young lambs used in the sacrificial cult find their proper function in being used for extispicy, one of the most important means of ascertaining the will of the gods.[4]

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[1] Gordon has a useful catalogue of subjects mentioned in the two collections on pp. 285-323.

[2] Ibid., p. 310.

[3] Ibid., p. 76. However, see the alternative translation of Jacobsen: "The songs of a city are its fortune-tellers." (pp. 460-61).

[4] Gordon, op. cit., p. 76.

A number of proverbs exude quite a different spirit. These are the proverbs which, with rather pointed satirical barbs, lampoon the Kalûm-priests because of their pretentious self-importance.[1] Notice the following translations and explanations by Jacobsen:

> The Kalû-priest, if he is engendering a(lit. 'his') son, (will say): "may he build cities as I do, may he give life to the nation as I do"!(2.99)

Here the priest is ridiculed for his incredible boast that by means of his cultic service he establishes and preserves city-states.[2]

> As the saying goes: If the Kalû-priest slips as he is sitting down, (he will immediately say): "it is a visitation from (lit. 'a thing of') my mistress Inanna: far be it from me that I may rise"!(2.100)
>
> As the saying goes: If the grain-boat of the Kalû-priest sinks for him, he will stand on dry land, (saying): "O Enki! In what you are robbing me of, may you take pleasure."(2.103).

These two proverbs, of course, aim a satirical blow at the pretentious priest who attributes divine import to every incidental matter, regardless of how trivial or disastrous.[3] The raison d'être for these proverbs is never expressed, and thus they remain humorous, but enigmatic. But since the Kalû-priest was the most important cultic official and was even found frequently in important governmental positions,[1] the sages have used satirical humor as a weapon to attack a professional class within Sumerian society for its pretentious and pompous self-esteem. This suggests, of course, that all areas of life as well as every social class are open to the critical analysis of the wise, including socially and cultically prominent groups, if those groups possess attributes which are subject to the stamp of foolishness or incorrect behavior according to the standards of the wise. Even social groups considered by the society as sacrosanct lost such a holy aura when observed by the sages.

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[1] So argues Jacobsen, p. 482. Gordon has suggested that the Kalû-priest is lampooned because of his being a eunuch and a devotee of the goddess Inanna, reasons which help in explaining why these proverbs are written mainly in the Emesal dialect, usually reserved for speeches of women and goddesses(op. cit., pp. 13-14, 310).

[2] Jacobsen, p. 482.

[3] Ibid., pp. 483-84.

In conclusion it is interesting to note that proverbial materials rarely provide references to cultic faith and practice. And, as we shall see, references to cult are usually found in other genres, especially "righteous sufferer" poems and instructions.[2]

Akkadian Wisdom Literature

The Marriage of Wisdom and Cult: Advice to a Prince.[3] One sapiential text, dating between 1,000-700 B.C., consists of omen-patterned counsels to a Babylonian ruler concerning the legal privileges guaranteed to citizens of three ancient Babylonian cities: Nippur, Sippar, and Babylon.[4] The counsels articulate the king's responsibility in maintaining social justice in general and in recognizing the legal rights of the citizens of these ancient cities.[1] If the king fails to maintain justice, and more specifically, if he tries to abrogate the divinely established and guaranteed privileges granted to the citizens of these three cities, then the entire Babylonian pantheon[2] will strike in concert against the king in divine retribution. For example,

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[1] Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

[2] This is the same in Hebrew Wisdom Literature as we shall see in Chapter IV.

[3] *BWL*, pp. 110-15, 316-317.

[4] *BWL*, pp. 110-11.

> If he does not heed the justice of this land, Ea, king of destinies, will alter his destiny and will not cease from hostilely pursuing him. (2-3).

The final omen-like admonition, found in lines 55-59, concerns the king's responsibility for the maintenance of the Babylonian cults, a responsibility which gave him the power to establish *corvée* labor gangs for temple building projects and various kinds of temple service.[3] However, due to the legal privileges enjoyed by the citizens of the three cities, they were exempted from the *corvée* gangs of the king. The punishment to be directed against the king for forcing these citizens to participate in the labor gangs is interesting for our concerns, since the punishment involved the great gods abandoning "their dwellings in their fury" and "not entering their shrines."

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[1] Oppenheim indicates that such a legal status was referred to as *kidinnūtu*, 'status of being under the aegis of the *kidinnu*', a term which "denotes an object placed at the gateway of such a city as a symbol of divine approval and protection which safeguarded the status of the citizens "(*Ancient Mesopotamia*, pp. 120-121).

[2] The gods mentioned are Ea, Shamash, Marduk, Enlil, Anu, Era, Addu, and Nabû.

[3] Oppenheim, *op. cit.*

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Such a threatened punishment directed against the king paralleled the cultic understanding that the temple was regarded as the dwelling place of the god of the city whose very presence insured the protection and prosperity for the city-state.[1] Such an acceptance of this cultic dogma is an indication that the wise supported the understanding that the cult played a crucial role in Mesopotamian life, for its practices secured divine blessings for society.[2]

The Counsels of Wisdom.[3] One of the best known instructions in Mesopotamian wisdom literature is "The Counsels of Wisdom" which dates probably from the Cassite rule of Mesopotamia.[4] The piece consists of 160 lines which are divided into ten different sections, each of which contains admonitions with respect to a single topic. Lambert lists the following sections and their topics:

(a)	19-25	Avoidance of bad companions.
(b)	26-30	Improper speech.
(c)	31-...	Avoidance of altercations and pacification of enemies.
(d)	...-65	Kindness to those in need.
(e)	68-71	The undesirability of marrying a slave girl.
(f)	72-80	The unsuitability of prostitutes as wives.[5]
(g)	81-...	The temptations of a vizier.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[2] See Edouard Dhorme, *Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*, Mana, II (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1945), 174f.

[3] Once more the translation is found in *BWL*, pp. 96-107.

[4] *BWL*, p. 97. Other Instructions include the "Instructions of Shuruppak," a section in the "Shamash Hymn," and "Counsels of a Pessimist."

[5] Among the prostitutes a wise man was to avoid in marriage was a temple harlot (*ḫa-rim-tu*) whose devotion to a god did not

(h) ...-134 Improper speech.
(i) 135-147 The duties and benefits of religion.
(j) 148-... Deception of friends.[1]

The most important section for our own scrutiny is section (i) which deals with the cultic duties that a sage is expected to perform:

> Every day worship (*kit-rab*) your god.
> Sacrifice (*ni-qu-u*) and benediction (*qi-bít pi-i*) are the proper accompaniment of incense (*qut-rin-ni*).
> Present your free-will offering (*šà-gi*$_8$*-gur*$_6$*-ra-a*) to your god,
> For this is proper toward the gods.
> Prayer (*su-up-pu-u*), supplication (*su-ul-ul-u*), and prostration (*u la-ban ap-pi*)
> Offer him daily and *you will* get your reward.
> Then you will have full communion with your god.
> In your wisdom study the tablet.
> Reverence (*pa-la-ḫu*) begets favour,
> Sacrifice (*ni-qu-u*) prolongs life,
> And prayer (*ù tés-li-tú*) atones for guilt.
> He who fears the gods (*pa-liḫ ilī*^{mes}) is not slighted by.(..)
> He who fears the Anunnaki extends (his days).[2]

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prevent the ingraining of an irreverent spirit concerning her new husband or a continuation of her profession after marriage. Such demonstrates that the wise were not entirely favorable of those professional priests and priestesses who devoted their bodies to the fertility cults. For a discussion of temple harlots, see Dhorme, *op. cit*., p. 213.

[1] Two general terms for worship which are used are *kit-rab* and *pa-la-ḫu*. Terms for sacrifice include *ni-qu-u* ("bloody sacrifice"), *ša-gi*$_8$*-gur*$_6$*-ra-a*, interpreted by Lambert as a "free-will offering," while the words for prayer are *qi-bít pi-i*, *su-ul-lu-u*, *su-up-pu-u*, *la-ban ap-pi*, and *tes-li-tu*. Finally the term for incense is *qut-rin-ni*. For a discussion of these cultic actions and the different terms, see Dhorme, *Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*, pp. 225f.

[2] *BWL*, p. 96.

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This section contains four admonitions (ll. 135, 137, 139-140, and 142) concerning the responsibility of the sage in the area of cultic offerings and prayer. The deity who should be the recipient of the sage's cultic worship is primarily one's personal deity,[1] and as can be discerned from the text, the motivations for cultic participation are those based upon the desire for a "reward," "favour," "longevity," in other words, one who pleases his deity by offering the proper sacrifices is able to gain the favor of the deity resulting in his protection and blessing. Other motivations for cultic participation include "communion" with one's own deity and the "atoning for guilt." Such a text testifies openly to the concern of the wise for proper cultic participation, especially as concerns one's own personal deity, since that deity was believed to possess protective powers which could divert the attacks of evil forces and the power to bless with prosperity and long life his observant worshippers. Thus it would be absurd to argue that the wise did not share the cultic belief concerning the importance of cultic participation. As the wise of Mesopotamia sought to find security within reality, they believed that the cult was an important way of achieving that security. Only the fool and the skeptic reject cultic duties.

Counsels of a Pessimist. One of the most interesting instructions from Mesopotamia is the instruction entitled by Lambert "Counsels of a Pessimist," because of the content that bespeaks a pessimistic resignation with respect to the evanescent character of human existence and activities.[1] The text, broken in several places, is terse, and, due to what appears to be a truncated form, may have been originally part of a larger work.[2] The first ten lines discredit the illusion of permanence sometimes attached to human life and the activities in which men engage themselves, with the concluding lines observing:

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[1] Other references to the personal deity are ll. 59 and 63.

> (Whatever) men do does not last for ever,
> Mankind and their achievements alike come to an end.
> (ll. 9-10).

With this rather futilitarian depiction of the limitations of human existence and capabilities, the author begins to suggest what may provide at least some limited security in existence. First, some security in human existence may be found in the protection of one's deity who is responsible for one's conception in the womb and who will continue to provide a shield against demonic and other evil forces, but only as long as one remains observant in his cultic devotion directed towards the needs of his god:

> (As for) you, offer prayers (*su-pe-e šu-taq-rib*) to (your) god,
> Let your free-will offering (*šagigurû*) be constantly before
> the god who created you. (ll. 11-12).

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[1] Lambert, *BWL*, pp. 107-9.

[2] *BWL*, pp. 107-108. The date is impossible to determine specifically, argues Lambert, who sets the rather broad limits of the First Dynasty of Babylon to the library of Ashurbanipal.

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And since the sage has stressed the fleeting brevity of human life and accomplishments, he encourages his audience to be cultically observant in the hopes that a pleased god and his consort will grant one with offspring, through whom a limited form of immortality is obtained:

> Bow down (*kan-šá-ta-ma*) before your city goddess that she may grant you offspring. (l. 13).

Then the sage moves into other areas of human activities in which his audience should be engaged, activities which at least provide the necessities for human existence: being concerned to care for one's crops and domesticated animals which provide the basis for human existence. Finally the sage admonishes his audience to banish the destructive forces of misery and suffering, choosing to rejoice rather in the reality of being alive (ll. 14-22). Though the last section concerning the banishment of misery is fragmentary, the sage apparently counsels his followers to dispense with fear and anxiety caused by "dreams," since the true origin of such dreams comes from "misery and suffering." What may be involved in this admonition is a veiled attack levelled against the cultic understanding of dreams within the sphere of divination, for dreams were, of course, considered to be the portents of future events, and were a way of determining the future, if properly interpreted by priestly officials. Our sage takes a strikingly modernistic view of dreams, appearing to scoff at the cultic concern for dream interpretation, and writes them off as the

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product of misery and suffering. The cure for dreams, especially those that appear to be terrifying, is to be contented and happy.[1]

Once again we are confronted with concerns for cultic involvement in Mesopotamian sapiential literature, in this case in an instruction by a sage who recognizes the limitations of human existence and accomplishments, and seeks to give his audience what he considers to be the primary means of accomplishing at least some security in a rather insecure reality. He chooses the double paths of cult and sapiential instruction. By being cultically observant one can continue to enjoy the protective guidance of one's personal deity and his consort, and even be rewarded with offspring who are the primary means for achieving "immortality" in Mesopotamian literature. But the sage is not cowered by the importance of the cultic institution, for one of its most sacred dogmas and practices is scoffed at: the practice of the interpretation of dreams. Our sage presents a psychological explanation of dreams instead of a theological one.

The Shamash Hymn.[2] A number of psalms in ancient Mesopotamia have been considered as wisdom psalms, a conclusion based primarily on content and the occurrence within the body of the psalms of a number of sapiential forms.[1] Among these is the lengthy hymn to Shamash, the god of justice in Babylonian wisdom.[2] As has been mentioned, Shamash plays a central role in the theology of the wise, because of his role in overseeing the process of retribution. Examples from our hymn include the following:

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[1] For a superb study of dreams in Mesopotamia, see Oppenheim, The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East. Our sage's scoffing at the theological interpretation of dreams is most similar to the remarks of Koheleth (5:1-7) and Sirach 31:1-8. See J. L. Crenshaw, "The Problem of Theodicy in Sirach: On Human Bondage," JBL, XCIV (1975), 47-64.

[2] Translation by BWL, pp. 121-38. For a study of the Shamash hymns and prayers, see P. Anastasius Schollmeyer, Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen und Gebete (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1912).

> You give the unscrupulous judge experience of fetters,
> Him who accepts a present and yet lets justice miscarry you make bear his punishment.
> As for him who declines a present, but nevertheless takes the part of the weak,

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[1] Extensive work needs to be done in the area of sapiential psalms in Mesopotamian literature along the lines established by Lambert and von Soden (See the latter's "Der grosse Hymnus an Nabu," ZA, LXVI (1971), 44-71). Von Soden has argued that this psalm was not written primarily for use in the cult, but rather was a confessional hymn written by a scholarly poet for a learned audience (Ibid., p. 48). A number of sapiential writings were dedicated in hymnic fashion to the gods of wisdom and order, as may be seen in the conclusions of a number of wisdom texts (e.g. see "Nisaba and Wheat," BWL, p. 173; and Kramer, "Schooldays," p. 213).

[2] For another discussion of this hymn, see F. M. Th. Bohl, "De Zonnegod als de Beschermer der Nooddruftigen," JEOL, VIII (1942), 665-80. Bohl comments concerning Shamash as the defender of right and justice: "Hij is de god, die bij zijn dagelijkschen loop over den hemel alle ongerechtigheid bespeurt en het moreele en sociale evenwicht op aarde handhaaft " (Ibid., p. 666). Lambert has divided the poem into the following sections:

1- 20	Shamash as the giver of light
21- 52	The beneficent care of Shamash
53- 82	Shamash as the source of all revelation and the caretaker of the needy
83-127	Shamash as the overseer of justice by means of retribution
128-148	The presence of Shamash even in remote spheres
149-155	The monthly festival in honor of Shamash
167-173	(lines not in context)
174-183	Renewal of praise for Shamash as the giver of light.

Cf. "The Babylonian Theodicy," BWL, p. 89, l. 297; and "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom;" BWL, p. 46, l. 120.

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> It is pleasing to Shamash, and he will prolong his life.
> (ll. 97-100).[1]

In addition to the common wisdom theme of Shamash as the one who maintains order by means of retribution, there is the instruction dealing with the dishonest and honest merchants.[2] Further the absence of any reference to incantation indicates that it is not written as a cultic incantation.[3] Finally while the form of the entire psalm is that of a hymn, the sapiential motifs and the instruction concerning the merchants lead Lambert to argue for the classification of the hymn as a wisdom hymn.

If the psalm has been correctly evaluated as a part of wisdom literature, then we have another important text demonstrating the concern of the wise for cultic participation. First, the psalm itself breathes of cultic piety issuing forth in a hymn praising the god of justice, and the context, if not the cult, very possibly could be the wisdom school. Secondly, there are several references to the Shamash cult, i.e. worship offered to Shamash as the god of justice, which demonstrate that the wise participated in the sun god cult.[4] Among the cultic devotions to Shamash is sacrifice, and especially the monthly festival in his honor which consisted of libations of beer poured out to Shamash because of his maintenance of justice and his deliverance of the righteous. Furthermore, Shamash is primarily the deity to whom the wise present their laments in the hope that he will remove their distress:

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[1] Cf. "The Babylonian Theodicy," BWL, p. 89, l. 297; and "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom;" BWL, p. 46, l. 120.

[2] Found in the section dealing with Shamash as the overseer of justice by means of retribution (ll. 83-127). The proverbial observation is sometimes bolstered by the motivation clause that such "is pleasing to Shamash " (ll. 100, 106, 119).

[3] C. D. Gray, "A Hymn to Shamash," AJSL, XVII (1901), 130.

[4] Prayer stands out in this hymn as the most important cultic ritual. The terms used for prayer are *su-up-pa-a*, *su-la-a*, *ka-ra-bi*, while the gestures used in praying, especially in offering laments

> You observe, Shamash, prayer, supplication, and benediction,
> Obeisance, kneeling, ritual murmurs, and prostration.
> The feeble man calls you from the hollow of his mouth,
> The humble, the weak, the afflicted, the poor, (ll. 130-33).
> ....

Finally, Shamash is approached in the cultic sphere because of his role as the revealer of fate and fortune in the sphere of divination, especially in the science of omenology, demonstrating that the wise regarded highly this cultic practice for ascertaining the will of the gods, especially that of Shamash.[1]

> You grant revelations, Shamash, to the families of men,
> Your harsh *face* and fierce light you give to them.
> You manage their omens and preside over their sacrifices,
> To all four points of the compass you probe their state.
> So far as human habitations stretch, you grant revelations
> to them all (ll. 149-53).

(Dhorme, *Les Religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*, p. 250) are *šu-kin-na* ("obeisance"), *kit-mu-su* ("kneeling"), *lit-ḫu-šu*("ritual murmurs"), and *la-ban ap-pi* ("prostration"). Other cultic rituals include *ni-(q)i-i* ("Sacrifice"), *sir-qi* ("libations"). Two terms for cultic worship which are used are *pal-ḫa* and *i-dal-lal*.

[1] For a superb discussion of omenology, see Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, pp. 210f. More recently, Glendon Bryce has discussed omen—wisdom in Mesopotamia and attempts to argue certain Israelite proverbs (19:10, 16:30, 9:12) are related to the form and content of certain Akkadian omens. He concludes that these Hebrew omen-proverbs may argue for the existence of priestly sages in Israel ("Omen-Wisdom in Ancient Israel," *JBL*, XCIV [1975], 19-37).

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The Strained Relationship: The Babylonian Theodicy.[1] The absence of a just social order and the subsequent vitiation of any perceptible principle of retribution functioning within the spheres of reality are the central concerns in one sapiential "contest," issues which lead the author to place in the mouth of one of his contestants the suggestion that the gods themselves are responsible for human wickedness, thus leading to the title of this piece of "contest" literature: "The Babylonian Theodicy." This sapiential writing is difficult to date precisely, though the formal structure is more easily perceived, being an acrostic poem divided into twenty-seven stanzas of argumentation between two sages, a "righteous sufferer" and a "friend" who represent respectively the assault of the critical wise against the major bulwarks of sapiential tradition and the pious, traditional wise who defend fortress wisdom against their more critical colleagues. Interestingly enough, the acrostic spells what presumably is the name and profession of the author of the dialogue: "Ich, Saggil-kinam-ubbib, der Beschwörer, bin ein Verehrer von Gott und König."[2]

This disputation between the two wise is initiated by the "sufferer's" own existential predicament: in spite of his righteousness, wisdom, and cultic piety, he has been abandoned by his personal

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[1] Translations are in BWL, 63-91, and ANET, 601-604.

[2] B. Landsberger, "Die babylonische Theodizee," ZA, XLIII (1936), 34. The date is extremely difficult to establish. Lambert suggests a time between 1400 and 800 B.C. (BWL, pp. 66-67).

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deity and has become the object of demonic attack and social oppression. The "friend" represents the views of traditional wisdom by staunchly arguing that world-order and the integrally connected principle of retribution are operative within the structure of reality which is maintained by the gods who ensure that the wicked fool is punished, but that the pious and righteous wise man is rewarded:

> He who waits on his god has a protective angel,
> The humble man who fears his goddess accumulates wealth.
> (II, 21-22).

While the "sufferer" may be impatient with the process, in due course, argues the "friend," retribution will be effectuated for him, if he remains pious and wise, whereas the wicked fool will certainly be destroyed "before his time."[1] By contrast, the "sufferer" counters both from his own experience and from his own observations of reality that such an understanding of reality shared by the "friend" is totally absurd. He has been pious and wise, and yet calamity has accompanied his every step:

> My strength is enfeebled, my prosperity has ended,
> Moaning and grief have blackened my features. (VI, 29-30).

Such catastrophes in spite of his personal piety and wisdom coincide with the natural world and its incongruities as well as the general tenor of society:

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[1] See VI; XX, 219-220; XII, 239-42. The position of the "friend" is parelleled in proverbial literature: "When you have seen the profit of reverencing (your) god, you will praise (your) god and salute the king." (BWL, p. 233; The Assyrian Collection, IV, 24-26).

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> The Onager, the wild ass, who filled itself with ..(.)
> Did it pay attention to the giver of assured divine oracles?
> The savage lion who devoured the choicest flesh,
> Did it bring its flour offering to appease the goddess's anger?
> (.)..the nouveau riche who has multiplied his wealth,
> Did he weigh out precious gold for the goddess Mami?

In fact, our sage contends that the pious, cultic observant is actually impoverished for his piety while the impious is enriched.[1] The "sufferer," to the obvious chagrin of the "friend," even considers discarding adherence to traditional wisdom piety, affirming that he will ignore religious observations and disobey social standards, choosing to exist as an impious social vagabond and criminal.[2] Finally he not only condemns the gods for being responsible for not maintaining a just and fair system of retribution, but attacks the tolerance of and even participation in social injustice by the masses which lead not only to a denigration of themselves, but also to the very suffering of those who, like himself, are pious and just (XXV).[1]

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[1] VII, 70-71:

> Those who neglect the god go the way of prosperity,
> While those who pray to the goddess are impoverished
> and dispossessed.

[2] XIII 133-43:

> I will abandon my home.(.........)
> I will desire no property.(,........)
> I will ignore my god's regulations and trample on his rites.
> I will slaughter a calf and....food,
> I will take the road and go to distant parts.
> I will bore a well and let loose a flood,
> Like a robber I will roam over the vast open country.
> I will go from house to house and ward off hunger;
> Famished I will walk around and patrol the streets.
> Like a beggar I will (....) inwards (........)
> Bliss is far away..(........)

The "friend," cognizant of his failure to prevail against the adamant position of the "sufferer," does advance his argumentation several steps in his responses to his critical friend. He concedes that the concept of "fate" may explain the reason for the suffering of some and the success of others, but attempts to discover reasons for the specific determination of fate and fortune are defeated by the inscrutability of the gods and their will.[2] Such a solution to the problem of the righteous "sufferer" is merely suggested and never tenaciously advocated either by the "friend" or the "sufferer." The "friend" in an effort to concoct a reasonable response to the accusation made by the "sufferer" against the masses for social injustice censures the deities who created mankind, for they have created mankind to be wicked by nature:

> Narru, King of the gods, who created mankind,
> And majestic Zulummar, who dug out their clay,
> And mistress Mami, the queen who fashioned them,
> Gave perverse speech to the human race.
> With lies, and not truth, they endowed them for ever (XXVI 276-80).

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[1] XXV, 265-75. Buccellati, "Tre saggi sulla sapienza mesopotamia--III, La teodicea: condanna del'abulia politica," OrAnt, XI (1972), 162-63. Cf. D. J. Wiseman, Assyria and Babylonia, CAH, II, chp. 31 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 38. He suggests that the theodicy may "reflect a conflict of political and religious ideologies caused by the times of economic stress resulting from the Aramaean incursions. There is evidence that this text, in its present form, was composed by Saggil-kinam-ubbit, a scholar of Babylon contemporary with the Aramaean usurper Adad-apal-iddina."

[2] XXIV, 254-64.

The poet who places such a view of human nature within the mouth of his pious and traditional sage never seems to realize the full implications of his suggestion, for if valid, anthropological and consequently societal order would be impossibilities. Such an idea may aid the "sufferer" in his efforts to understand why he is the object of social oppression, but it would certainly make wisdom's search for "order" an impossible quest. We are left with many ponderables concerning the sage's thesis, but the absence of extrapolations leaves us with no concrete solutions. The response of the "sufferer" is difficult to ascertain in the final section. He seems to have had his anguish somewhat alleviated by the suggestion of the "friend" that the gods, at least the ones who created mankind, are ultimately responsible for the perversity of mankind, and thus the "sufferer" does not merit the social oppression by which he has been victimized. He also gains some solace, it seems, by having found a wise friend who can commiserate with his suffering and who well knows he is free of personal guilt. Strangely enough, the "sufferer" does not abandon his piety, but rather adjures his personal deity and his consort to return their protective presence, and concludes with the hymnic adulation of Shamash, the shepherd who "guides the peoples like a god." Perhaps we should conclude that the "sufferer" can accept that the blame for perversity of man rests with the gods, but Shamash, the god of justice, seems to be absolved of any complicity, and his function as the god of justice is affirmed. Thus the "sufferer" finds his only recourse to be that of hoping for his eventual salvation by the god of justice.[1]

As has been indicated above, the major contention between the two sages concerns the spheres of cultic piety and righteousness. The author of the contest paints the picture of the traditional sage who bows in cultic adoration before the gods, and especially before his own personal deity and consort, with the expressed motivation being that cultic piety leads to reward, whereas cultic negligence leads to destruction.[2] While righteous behavior is also mentioned, it is primarily cultic piety and its supposed rewards that stand at the heart of the contest.[3] The "sufferer," on the basis of personal experience as well as his own observations concerning nature and society, is depicted as one who contends that cultic piety does not bring the garland of success and prosperity, but, and here is an obvious case of hyperbole, may actually lead to the destruction of the pious. Neither does the disregard of cultic participation bring the punishment of the culpable, for such people actually enjoy a happy and prosperous life. As a result, he avows on one occasion that he will completely disregard cultic observances. Yet as indicated above, the final position of the "sufferer" is not one of promethean defiance, but rather is that of one who prays for the return of his protective deities and continues to hope that the god of justice, Shamash, will find him pious and just and will reward him accordingly. In this sapiential writing, the structure of cult with its principle of reward and punishment was cracked but did not crumble. The poet could see no other alternative to that of a renewed avowal of piety by the "sufferer."

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[1] Buccellati has cogently observed that the only two possibilities for the "sufferer" are either a complete denial of social, religious, and cultural values (XIII) or humility and an imploring of his "friend " and his personal gods and Shamash to help and comfort him (XXVII). (*op. cit.*, p. 162). Cf. Gray, "The Book of Job in the Context of Near Eastern Literature," *ZAW*, LXXXII (1970), 258; and J. J. Stamm, "Die Theodizee in Babylon und Israel," *JEOL*, IX (1952), 103.

[2] As is the case in most Mesopotamian wisdom literature, the primary emphasis is placed upon one's protective deity and his consort.

[3] Cultic terminology used by the author include terms for worship (*pa-li-iḫ*, *a-dàl-lal*), cultic rites (*par-ṣ (i)*, *pi-il-lu-dè-e*

I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom.[1] The best known "righteous sufferer" poem in Mesopotamian literature is *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom," written during the "Dark Ages" of Mesopotamian history, the Cassite Period,[2] either by the "sufferer" himself, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan,[3] or more probably by an unknown sage

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ili, and *ma-si-šu*), prayer (*su-up-pe-e*, *il-la-ba-an appi*, and *te-mi-qi*), flour offering (*mas-ḫat-s (u)*), offerings (*nin-(d)a-ba-a*), and prescribed offerings (*sat(tu)kkē^{e}*).

[1] For the translation, see *BWL*, pp. 21-62. However, the lost introduction consisting of a hymn has been published by E. Leichty, "Two New Fragments of Ludlul Bel Nemeqi," *Or*, XXVIII (1959), 361-63; and it is now found in the translation in *ANET*, p. 596.

[2] *BWL*, p. 21. Gray specifically dates the piece around 1500 B.C. ("The Book of Job in the Context of Near Eastern Literature," p. 254), while W. von Soden argues for a 12th century dating ("Das Fragen nach der Gerechtigkeit Gottes im alten Orient," *MDOG*, XCVI (1965), 49.

[3] *BWL*, p. 51; Tablet III, l. 43.

utilizing the common autobiographical style of poetic fiction.[1] In this excellent literary creation, the "sufferer" is characterized as a feudal lord who rules a city for a Cassite sovereign,[2] and who is beset by numerous catastrophes including his social and political plummeting from the position of feudal lord to that of slave, the animosity of his former Cassite overlord, the treachery of his former courtiers, the contempt of his fellow men, the abandonment by his relatives and former comrade, and the onslaught of demonic forces believed responsible for his bodily ills, all of which were occasioned by the inexplicable desertion of his personal deity. Thus the key issue is the inexplicable abandonment of the noble by his personal deity, a desertion which has resulted regardless of the feudal lord's observance of cultic responsibilities. Since retribution was a time-honored dogma in Mesopotamian wisdom and cult, the "sufferer," whose thoughts are bound to such a dogma, is at a loss to explain the god's desertion and the subsequent catastrophes occasioned by such a divine action. The poem becomes then an anguished wrestling with the dogmas of retribution and the justice of the personal deity which seem controverted by the sage's human experience.

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[1] W. von Soden, "Zur ersten Tafel von Ludlul bel nemeqi," *BiOr*, X (1953), p. 8.

[2] Lambert argues: "One may conjecture that Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan was a feudal lord ruling a city for the Cassite monarch." (*BWL*, p. 22).

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The flow of the contents may be summarized as follows. In Tablet I the opening is a hymn in praise of Marduk as the wise and powerful deity whose anger brings destruction, but whose mercy by contrast extends the healing powers of salvation to one in dire distress. After an unfortunate lengthy break in the text, the poet then presents the disconsolate state of the feudal lord who, because of the desertion of his deity, has suffered from what appears to have been a successful treacherous plot of court intrigue which resulted in the Cassite King's anger and the lord's subsequent removal from office. Further disasters included enslavement of him and his family and the hostility and contempt of the city's populace, his relatives, and even his former confidant. In his distress he turns to diviners and exorcists whose magical activities were important in obtaining either a solution to his problem or soothing comfort. Tablet II proceeds to present the worsening of the man's position, this time due, not to human treachery, but rather to demonic powers who have afflicted his body with insufferable torment; all this, in spite of his faithfulness in the observance of cultic rites and loyalty to the Cassite ruler. Such leads him to surmise that the retributive standards of the gods must actually be the opposite of those of men, or at the very best, the gods have hidden themselves in the dark clouds of inscrutability, impervious to human understanding. Yet the tablet concludes with what seems to be a wistful belief in his coming deliverance. In Tablet III, the description of the salvation of the noble is depicted, as Marduk, his personal deity,

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apparently has had his anger assuaged by means of exorcism and the lament, for this seems to be the implication of the appearance of four rather enigmatic persons in the four described visions who are presented apparently as exorcists and incantation priests. The demonic forces are dispelled, he successfully negotiates a river ordeal, and Marduk's protective powers once again engulf him. Tablet IV(?) presents the redeemed sufferer as proclaiming the great salvation of Marduk to his fellow Babylonians, and the performance of his thanksgiving sacrifices in the Esagil before Marduk and his consort.

The central issue which dominates the author's thinking is, of course, the general problem of the "just sufferer," i.e. why an individual who has been rigorously precise in his cultic loyalties and duties to the gods, especially his own personal deity, and unswerving in his feudal fealty to his Cassite sovereign, suddenly finds himself abandoned by the encompassing protective power of his deity, consequently is cast into a position of suffering, and made the object of contempt. The critical issue of theodicy never reaches the impassioned and blasphemous stage of Joban anger, but certainly the issue is viewed with a questioning perplexity.[1] The closest the

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[1] Lambert makes the observation: "To the pious writer it was blasphemy openly to charge Marduk with the injustice of allowing his devoted servants to suffer... Unlike Job the author of Ludlul was not free to debate the question openly because of its blasphemous implications." ("The Literary Structure, Background and Ideas of the Babylonian 'Poem of the Righteous Sufferer'," Akten des vierundzwanzigsten Internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses München (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1959).

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sufferer comes to presenting an accusation against the moral justice of the gods is his articulation of the idea that his own predicament and his failure to understand why results from the impossibility of forcing upon divine will and activity humanly conceived standards of justice and morality:

> What is proper to oneself is an offence to one's god,
> What in one's own heart seems despicable is proper to
> one's god.(Tab. II, 11.34-5).

Such an idea, if accepted, would negate the basic affirmation of wisdom that human standards of justice, resulting from sapiential understanding and experience, are reflective of divine standards, or in other words, of the divinely established system of just order that permeates the universe. He proceeds further into the theological realm in his questioning about his own predicament and muses that perhaps the gods are inscrutable, therefore making it an impossible task for man to determine the divine will and to make this the basis for human behavior that leads to security in human existence:

> Who knows the will of the gods in heaven?
> Who understands the plans of the underworld gods?
> Where have mortals learnt the way of a god?
> He who was alive yesterday is dead today.(Tab. II, 36-39).

The only alternatives left to the sufferer as he contemplates his course of action are either a complete rejection of the sapiential and cultic ideas that ethically conceived behavior and cultic participation lead to security in human existence, ideas based upon a revealed understanding of the gods in supernatural and natural revelation, and a resorting to cultic participation in the hope that the

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divine anger and needs would eventually result in appeasement or a total abandonment of the quest for understanding based upon an accurate perception of the divine will and a turning to completely anthropological concerns. The marriage of sapiential ideas of order with cultic processes for the appeasement of divine wrath through the ritual and theology of the lament process is not annulled by our sage, though it is intensely questioned. He chooses to continue to affirm his faith in the justice of the gods and to lament for deliverance from Marduk, hoping that his present torment would be alleviated and ultimately his plight answered. Enigmatically, Marduk is presented as delivering the sufferer from death, and, it is possible, that the sufferer was restored to his former position as is implied in the Commentary:

> Besides the River, where the judgment of the people is decided,
> My brow was shaved and my slave mark removed.
> I proceeded along the Kunus-dadru Street--redeemed!
> ....
> He who has done wrong in respect of Esagil; let him learn from my example!
> It was Marduk who put a muzzle on the mouth of the lion who was eating me.
> Marduk despoiled my pursuer of his sling and turned aside his slingstone.(ll. l-r).

Therefore, the author apparently is satisfied with the eventual salvation of the nobleman, and never articulates any reasons for the suffering of the feudal lord, apparently advocating the position that eventually deliverance will come to the faithful devotee who maintains his decorum of obedience even when on the brink of the abyss.

If we may include this reflective poem concerning the lament's ritual and theology among the Mesopotamian wisdom literature,[1] then the importance of this text for our quest to determine the views of the wise concerning cult cannot be overestimated. The central protestation of the sufferer has been that he has faithfully performed his cultic duties, and, therefore, is undeserving of his god's desertion and the subsequent misfortunes which have afflicted him. Thus his defense rests primarily upon an advocacy of his continued cultic loyalty. In Tablet II, after lamenting his inexplicable abandonment by his deity and the resulting suffering, he protests that such suffering should come only to the fool who had been frivolous with respect to cultic obligations to be performed on behalf of his deity:

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[1] The major problem in including this poem within the sphere of wisdom literature is the question of determining its genre. It certainly is closely similar to the Psalm of Thanksgiving, for it includes a hymnic introduction concerning Marduk and his power to rescue the needy (I, 1f.), a description by the sufferer of his former state of suffering (I-II) and his subsequent deliverance by Marduk (III), and his thanksgiving to Marduk and his consort in the temple which involves his proclamation to others of Marduk's great power to save. Kuhl does argue that it is a _Dankgebet_ ("Neuere Literaturkritik des Buches Hiob," _ThR_, XXI[1953], p. 299). Oppenheim seems to imply the same (_The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East_, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1956, p. 217). Lambert suggests that it is much like a dramatization of an incantation ("Literary Structure," p. 147). Gese has considered the poem as an example of "The Paradigm of an Answered Lament," (_Lehre und Wirklichkeit_). Van Dijk has cogently argued, however, that the poem was not intended for the cult, but rather should be regarded as a reflective poem seeking to deal with the critical problem of one who suffers unjustly, and in this way differs from psalms of confession which are efforts to persuade a deity to change his attitude towards a penitent and act to deliver him (_op. cit._, p. 119). We tend to accept Van Dijk's arguments and classify the writing as a sapiential reflective poem concerning the theology and ritual of the lament-thanksgiving process. We shall meet similar poems in the Hebrew psalter, especially Psalm 73, and, of course, in the Dialogues of Job.

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> When I look behind, there is persecution, trouble.
> Like one who has not made libation (*tam-qí-tum...uk-tin-nu*),
> Nor invoked his goddess at table,[1]
> Does not engage in prostration (*ap-pi*), nor takes cognizance
> of bowing down (*šu-kin-ni*);
> From whose mouth supplication (*su-up-pe-e*) and prayer (*tés-li-ti*) is lacking,
> Who has done nothing on holy days (u$_4$-mu ili), and despised
> sabbaths (eś-še-ši).[2]
> Who in his negligence has despised the god's rites,
> Has not taught his people reverence and worship (*pa-la-ḫu ù it-ʾu-du*),
> But has eaten his food without invoking his god,
> And abandoned his goddess by not bringing a flour offering
> (*mas-ḫa-tu*),
> Like one who has grown torpid and forgotten his lord,
> Has frivolously sworn a solemn oath by his god,
> (like such an one) do I appear. (II, 12-22).

On the contrary, the sufferer constructs a picture of himself as a faithfully meticulous cultic devotee:

> For myself, I gave attention to supplication (*su-up-pu-ú*)
> and prayer (*tés-li-ti*).
> To me prayer (*tés-li-ti*) was discretion, sacrifice (*ni-qu-u*)
> my rule.
> The day for reverencing the god (*u$_4$-mu pa-la-aḫ ilī^{mes}*) was
> a joy to my heart;
> The day of the goddess's procession (*u$_4$-mu ri-du-ti diš-tar*)
> was profit and gain to me.[3]
> The king's prayer (*ik-ri-bi śarri*)--that was my joy,[4]
> And the accompanying music became a delight for me.
> I instructed my land to keep the god's rites (*me$^{\text{meš}}$*),
> And provoked my people to value the goddess's name.
> I made praise for the king like a god's,
> And taught the populace reverence for the palace. (II, 23-32).

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[1] Lambert argues ll.13 and 19 refer to a cultic meal (*BWL*, p. 289).

[2] *eš-še-ši* is the monthly offerings and rites (Dhorme, *op. cit.*, p. 235).

[3] For a discussion of the cultic procession, see Dhorme, *op. cit.*, pp. 243f.

[4] For examples of prayers for the king, see *SAHG*, pp. 279f.

It is at this instant that the frustration of the sage over the failure of such actions to obtain release from his misfortunes leads him to question whether such cultic actions which were considered by the wise to be right and efficacious were exactly the opposite of what the gods considered as just and proper:

> I wish I knew that these things were pleasing to one's god!
> What is proper to oneself is an offence to one's god,
> What in one's own heart seems despicable is proper to one's god. (11. 33-35).

Thus he calls into question the ideas of justice and cultic duties, questioning the revelation upon which they were supposedly based:

> Who knows the will of the gods in heaven?
> Who understands the plans of the underworld gods?
> Where have mortals learnt the way of a god? (11. 36-38).

Thus he draws into question the very foundations of wisdom and cult. Such a questioning coupled with the reflection that perhaps the gods are inscrutable strike at the heart of Babylonian religion which stressed that cultic obedience was a revealed demand of the gods, a teaching buttressed by the traditional wise, and that cultic obedience produced security in human existence. Furthermore his attack on the inability of the clergy to determine the causes of his predicament and to resolve his problems by means of divination and exorcism cast doubt upon the effectiveness of the priestly office (Tab. I, 11. 51-52; II, 11. 6-9, 110-11).[1] Such disclaimers of the

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[1] The various priests, diviners, and exorcists who are named by the poet as being unable to help the sufferer, at least initially, are the *bārû* ("diviner"), the *šā'ilu* ("dream priest"), the *mašmaššu* ("incantation priest"), the *zāqīqu* (possibly an "astrologist")' and the *a-ši-pu* ("exorcist"). See Tablet II, 11. 6-9, and 110-111. The

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efficacy of cult would have been a devastating blow to cult and its support by the wise had the poem ended abruptly following such outbreaks against the strictures of sapiential teachings concerning the cult. However, the poet offers the sufferer no other recourse than to continue to resort to diviners and exorcists and to continue to offer his lament in an effort to remedy his situation. And finally such persistence pays off, for Marduk, through, it seems, the activities of the priests and the lament process has his anger assauged, the sufferer is delivered from his terrible situation, and he is restored to his former glory.

Finally, if Tablet IV(?) is a part of the original poem,[1] then we see the noble presenting himself along with his sacrificial offerings in the Esagil before Marduk and his consort in thanksgiving, praising the wise Marduk for his salvation, which should be an example to all. Thus this would be connected with the opening hymn

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four enigmatic figures who appear to the sufferer in four dreams include an exorcist in dream two, an incantation priest in dream four, a young woman who is suggested by Lambert to be an *entu*-priestess (*BWL*, p. 22), and the young man in dream one whose identity and function remain unknown since his message is lost (Tablet III, ll. 1f.). For discussions of these priests and the *entu*-priestess, see Dhorme, *op. cit.*, pp. 206f. For a superb discussion of divination in general, see Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, pp. 206-227.

[1] Lambert argues that this tablet is either tablet V or perhaps not even a part of the original poem at all (*BWL*, p. 30).

of thanksgiving to Marduk for his powers of salvation.[1] Such a piece of literature is best seen as a serious reflection over the theology and ritual of the lament-thanksgiving process which was based upon the ideas of the justice and mercy of the gods and a questioning of the ability of the process to discover the reasons for divine chastisement and to effect the appeasement of divine wrath. Such was supported by the traditional wise who counseled their adherents to engage in the lament-thanksgiving process when afflicted by suffering ("The Babylonian Theodicy, and "The Man and His God"). While the process is seriously

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[1] The description of the redeemed nobleman's thanksgiving in the Esagil is filled with cultic detail (Tablet IV(?), 11.76f.).

( )..which in my prayers (*tés-li-ti-ia*)..(.......)
(With) prostration (*la-ban ap-pi*) and supplication (*ut-ni-ni*)
(....) to Esagil.
....
In the "Gate of Pure Water" I was sprinkled with water of
purification (*me-e te-lil-te as-sa-li-iḫ*),
....
In the "Gate of Exuberance" I kissed the foot of Sarpanitum
(*še-ep ṣar-pa-ni-tum an-na-šiq*).
I persisted in supplication and prayer (*su-pe-e ù te-me-qi*)
before them,
Fragrant incense (qut-rin-na) I placed before them,
I presented an offering, a gift, accumulated donations
(*ir-ba ta-ʾ-ti igisê eta-an-du-te*),
I slaughtered fat oxen (*le-e ma-re-e*), and butchered *fattened
sheep* (*sap-di*),
I repeatedly libated honey-sweet beer (*at-ta-naq-qi ku-ru-un-
nu du-uš-šu-pá*) and pure wine (*karāna (i)l-lu*).
....
(..). libation (*tam-qi-ti*) I made their hearts glow,
....
(I..). oil, curds, and choicest grain (*el-la ḫi-ma-tú ṭuḫ-di
aš-na-an*).
(.......).....the rites of the temple (*parṣi bīti*).

Lambert has suggested reading *šapsu* "fattened sheep" instead of *sap-di* in line 94 (*BWL*, p. 301). For a translation and study of Mesopotamian laments and thanksgiving hymns, see *SAHG*.

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questioned by our poet, in the final analysis, he offers the suggestion that the only recourse for the one afflicted by suffering is the traditional cultic one.[1]

The Absolving of the Bond: Dialogue of Pessimism.[2] The sages in Mesopotamia were intimately involved in efforts to determine which human activities provided the sources for meaning in human existence. One such sage produced a reflective dialogue, usually named the "Dialogue of Pessimism," in which he set forth an examination of human activities which had been judged by men as providing the basis for meaningful existence. And he comes to the depressing conclusion that each of these esteemed activities could not be deemed intrinsically good and as a valid basis for meaningful existence, for every advantageous result issuing forth from such an activity has its adverse counterpart.[3] In other words the nature of each activity had the potential two-edged sword of good and evil results.[4] The activities listed in the nine strophes of the dialogue include in order of their appearance in the writing: prestige, sumptuous dining, leisure time, family, power, love, religion, business activities, and patriotism, and unfortunately each has its own potential for devastating consequences. In each strophe, a nobleman enthusiastically announces a course of action deemed worthwhile, and as that which provides meaning in human existence, and his slave, in turn, sets forth a proverbial reply which buttresses the positive values of such a pursuit. The nobleman then abruptly changes his intention and announces he has rejected

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[1] A comparable text concerning a just sufferer who continues to offer a lamentation to his god who finally announces a speech of salvation to the sufferer is AO4462 (J. Nougayrol, "Un version ancienne du 'juste souffrant,'" RB, LIX [1952], pp. 239-50). Also see R. S. 25.460 (Jean Nougayrol, Emmanuel Laroche, Charles Virolleaud, and Claude F. A. Schaeffer, Ugaritica, V, Mission de Ras Shamra , XVI (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1968), 266f.).

[2] For the translation, see BWL, pp. 139-149.

[3] The date can be no earlier than the beginning of the Iron Age (1,200 B.C.), since there is a reference to an 'iron dagger' in l. 52 (Jean Bottéro, "Le'Dialogue Pessimiste' et la transcendance," RThPh, XVI (1966), 7.

[4] The most frequently encountered interpretation is the one which regards the piece as essentially a pessimistic, skeptical,

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philosophical tractate that negates all value to human activity (See Thorkild Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia," The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 218; S. Langdon, Babylonian Wisdom (London: Luzac and Co., 1923), p. 68; and G. B. Gray, "Job, Ecclesiastes, and a New Babylonian Literary Fragment," ET, XXXI [1920], 441). Lambert (BWL, p. 141) adds to this interpretation the feeling that perhaps the piece is written by a disturbed mind in a state of morbid depression. Bottéro accepts the pessimistic interpretation, though he combines this with a satirical attack on proverbial wisdom as the basis for human activity, since, as the slave so adroitly demonstrates, a proverbial response can be made to support both a decision to act or a decision to refrain from acting (op. cit., p. 15). G. Buccellati has followed Bottéro's interpretation, though he stresses the repeatedly found polarity of thought that occurs in this piece which is frequent in wisdom literature in general: "il leitmotif del Dialogo è la polarità." By this he means that due to the multiplicity of sapiential experiences, the wise constructed "the science of opposites" whereby the results of a particular activity were weighed against each other in an attempt to discover if the activity were worthwhile or not ("Tre saggi sulla sapienza mesopotamica, II. Il Dialogo del Pessimismo: la scienze delgi oppositi come ideale sapienziale," OrAnt, XI [1972], pp. 92f. A completely different interpretation has been presented by E. A. Speiser who refers to the dialogue as a satirical farce performed before an audience by two performers and meant primarily to entertain, and, therefore, the piece should not be regarded as serious pessimism ("The Case of the Obliging Servant," JCS, VIII [1954], 98-105). For a cogent rebuttal of Speiser's arguments, see Lambert, BWL, pp. 139f.

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pursuing such an activity, whereupon the sagacious slave[1] responds again with proverbial observations pertaining to the possible adverse results of such an activity. Having negated the positive value of each activity deemed capable of providing meaning in human existence, the slave suggests in answer to the master's query, "What, then is good"?: "to have my neck and your neck broken and to be thrown into the river is good." Thus suicide is the only activity that can be deemed as "good." Such a suggestion is supported by the sage in the appending to his answer two impossible questions taken from other Mesopotamian literature:[2]

> Who is so tall as to ascend to the heavens?
> Who is so broad as to compass the underworld?

The point of the impossible questions is to demonstrate the impossibility of man to ascertain whether an activity, even a treasured one, may provide meaning in life, and whether or not it should be pursued, seeing that the reverse of what is desired may result with no orderly reality to be perceived, or to become the basis for meaningful pursuits,

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[1] The slave is presented as a wise man who can support both a decision to act or not to act by means of proverbial sayings. Bottéro's precise argument that this dialogue attacks sentence wisdom as the basis for making decisions deserves careful consideration, though we believe that something more than an attack against sentence wisdom is involved, and that is an all out attack of wisdom's claim to perceive world order and the sapiential doctrine of meaningful action based on the dictates of order.

[2] Cf. "The Gilgamesh Epic," *ANET*, p. 79; Tablet III, iv, ll. 3f.

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the wise man is faced with an existence in torment, meaningless and full of despair that can be remedied by the only activity deemed "good": suicide. When the master probes the slave to determine if the slave has answered seriously, he tells the slave that, if such were true, then he will put the slave to death first, a testing to which the slave responds in striking fashion. He suggests that the absence of meaning would so engulf the despondent master that he too would choose quick self-destruction.[1]

The section dealing with cultic participation (53-61) is the most germane to our investigation. As is obvious from the analyses of other sapiential texts, cult was regarded by the wise as an area to be observed and followed, for such was a primary way of gaining some security in a rather precarious existence. Divine favour was believed to provide a shield of protection around the pious cultic devotee, keeping him from the powers of evil, and surrounding him with divine beneficence. After all, the gods had created mankind for the specific purpose of providing them with their essential needs, needs which could be met in cultic offerings and participation by the pious. But in the "Dialogue," as one might already have presumed, a different picture of cult emerges. In the typical way that the dialogue is structured throughout, the master announces his intention to engage in making a sacrificial offering to his personal deity,[2] having just commanded, first of all, his slave to provide him with water for purification before engaging in the rites. The slave in typical fashion, then supports the course of action by quoting a proverb intended to affirm the inherent value in cultic participation:

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[1] Bottéro, op. cit., pp. 15f.

[2] The deity with which the nobleman is concerned is typically his personal deity (cf. ll. 55,56,58,60,61).

> The man who sacrifices to his god is satisfied with the bargain:
> He is making loan upon loan.

Such a saying demonstrates that cultic activity results in the deity being placed in debt to the worshipper, and that he must reciprocate with a desired reward. Then the groundwork is laid for the rejection of such a commonly accepted dogma. The master in typical fashion abruptly changes his mind and informs his servant that he will not participate in cultic sacrifice to his deity. The slave responds once more with a proverbial reply stressing that sacrifice results in the deity's constant hounding of the master "like a dog" which realizes its complete dependence upon the man. Thus the slave contends that the gods cannot exist apart from human devotees, and yet their constant demands for sustaining cultic service negate the advantages which might accrue to the cultically observant in the form of divine pleasure and blessing.[1] The absurdity of cultic religion suggested here is that it makes the deity completely dependent upon the man, a dependence too bothersome to tolerate.[1]

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[1] Jacobsen presents the interpretation of the slave's response to the master's determination to refrain from cultic observance: "in other words, 'be uppish with the god'; let him feel that he depends upon you for service, for prayer, and for many other things, so that he will run after you, begging you to worship him." (op. cit., p. 217). However, since the other responses of the slave to the master's decision not to pursue an activity involve the slave's listing of the disadvantages of the action, we would go farther by suggesting that the slave is bolstering the decision not to sacrifice by showing that the deity's constant demands for cultic worship to meet his needs produce far more bothersome troubles than any reward the deity might provide the master.

This dialogue demonstrates that the critical wise of the ancient Near East did criticize and even blatantly attack cultic religion during periods of skepticism and doubt precipitated by catastrophic experiences which destroyed the confident assertion of the existence of a beneficent world order. But this piece of wisdom literature not only swings the executioner's axe against the neck of cultic religion, but other activities usually deemed good and meaningful for human existence, demonstrating that it is not simply religion that is singled out for attack, but the entire gamut of sapiential activities within the sphere of human existence.[2]

Conclusions

As we conclude our examination of the views of the Mesopotamian wise concerning cultic religion, it becomes apparent that the insecurity of Mesopotamian life had two important consequences for the Sumerian and Akkadian sages. The first was the significant emphasis placed upon cultic religion by the wise in the obvious attempt to channel the protective powers of the gods into the arenas of political and individual existence. Thus the pious wise in Mesopotamia in their search for certainty in life admonished their adherents to be cultically observant, not only with respect to the state gods, but even more importantly with respect to one's personal god and goddess. The personal god and goddess were believed to provide the individual savant who was faithful in his cultic duties with blessings, security, and protection against the demonic forces. Such traditional, pious wise were the authors of the Shamash Hymn, the Counsels of Wisdom, and even the Counsels of a Pessimist.

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[1] The idea of the dependence of the gods upon human service is common in Mesopotamian literature (e.g., see the recounting of the flood story in "The Epic of Gilgamesh," Tablet XI, lines 158f.; *ANET*, p. 95). See Dhorme, *op. cit.*, pp. 221f.

[2] The cultic rituals mentioned include purification before engaging in cultic service and sacrifice (*niqâ ana ili-ia lu-pu-uš*). The general term for cultic rites is also used: *par-ṣi*.

However, the second consequence of this pervading insecurity so noticeable in Mesopotamian society and literature was the outcry of the sages against the justice of their gods and the effectiveness of cultic religion during periods of political and/or individual distress. Not only was the justice of the gods placed under critical scrutiny, but so were the failures of cultic religion to provide the security so desperately wanted by the sages. The cultic institutions and practices which came under most of the criticism included divination, exorcism, and the cultic lament. The crescendo of the criticisms rises from an almost inaudible murmur found in the Sumerian "A Man and God" to the deafening roar found in the Babylonian Theodicy and "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom." Yet while cultic religion is severely questioned as regards its effectiveness and validity, these critical sages do not abandon their allegiance and loyalty to the cult. The sufferers are presented as continuing their

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cultic efforts to obtain release from their suffering, and only the sufferer in the Babylonian Theodicy is still continuing his cultic efforts to be redeemed when the text ends.

Only one Mesopotamian wisdom text completely castigates and even ridicules cultic piety, and this is the Dialogue of Pessimism which lays bare the complete dependence of the gods upon their human worshippers, and which concludes that the constant demands of the gods for cultic service negates any advantages which might accrue to the worshippers. However, it must be pointed out that the same text overturns the other accepted values of Mesopotamian society.

Finally, we also have discovered that the Mesopotamian sages participated in the writing of long didactic poems, most of which are similar to cultic genres. These include the Shamash Hymn, "A Man and his God," and "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom." This gives us further evidence that the sages of the ancient Near East participated in the writing of poetry similar to cultic psalms, and may have intended their artistic creations to be used in cultic service.

CHAPTER IV

THE VIEWS OF CULT IN ISRAELITE WISDOM LITERATURE

A. The World View of Israelite Wisdom Literature

Before initiating our quest to discover the views of the Israelite sages with respect to the realm of cult, we should set forth certain broad guidelines which speak to the views of reality as perceived by the Hebrew sages.

Wisdom and the Cosmos

As we have found in other ancient Near Eastern wisdom literatures, so it is that the Israelite wisdom literature speaks of the creation as being permeated by an all-embracing cosmic order, *Ṣ^{e}dāqâh*, which serves as the "glue" holding together the various components of created order in a well-integrated, harmonious whole.[1] Thus each natural phenomenon had its own particular place, function, time, and norms regulating its existence within the complex of cosmic order. Sirach speaks of cosmic order in 16:24-28:

> The works of the Lord have existed
> from the beginning by his creation,
> And when he made them,
> he determined their divisions.
> He arranged his works in an eternal order,
> and their dominion for all generations;
> They neither hunger nor grow weary,
> and they do not cease from their labors.

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[1] For an indepth study of order, see the fundamental study by Hans Heinrich Schmid, *Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung*.

They do not crowd one another aside,
  and they will never disobey his word.[1]

Thus the task of the wise man became that of observing this complex of natural phenomena held in an orderly continuum in order to perceive their interrelated unity and to deduct from them the divine norms which governed their harmonious functioning within the order of the cosmos. By observing and consequently placing these cosmic dictates into the major forms of sapiential language, the sages obtained the basis for guidance in the living of a wise and orderly existence in harmony with the other natural phenomena. For once the sage by means of his wisdom[2] discovered his own place, function, and time within the gamut of cosmic order, he then had the means to achieve harmony with the structure of creation.

The Israelite wise also perceived this order in terms of justice, thus making an ethical category the permeating force which held in concert the various phenomena of the cosmos, and did not view order as cold, amoral, and indifferent to just and righteous behavior of men. Therefore, we find intimately connected with the idea of cosmic order the idea of retribution in which orderly, wise behavior of men led to their experiencing of blessing, whereas the disorderly, foolish behavior of the wicked led to their destruction, for the maintenance and continuous functioning of world order depended upon conformity to the dictates of an ordered reality, and consequently those who were ignorant of or rebelled against these cosmic norms were led by their own wicked behavior to destruction.[1]

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[1] Cf. Job 38-42; Prov. 8; Sir. 16 and 38; and Wis. 7:15-22.

[2] A working definition of wisdom is extremely difficult to fabricate as any reading of the major scholarly literature will attest. However we shall suggest the following three faceted definition. First wisdom may be perceived as man's search for and ability to perceive order within reality. Second, wisdom is man's search for meaning and self-understanding. The wise man perceived his task to be that of discovering his proper place, function, and time within the order of reality. By finding his place, function, and time, he becomes aware of the meaning of existence for himself and may achieve self-understanding. Third, wisdom is man's quest to master life. Wisdom was considered capable of providing the wise man with the ability to come to terms with reality so that he would know how to act and what to do in every conceivable situation. Among the best definitions of wisdom in current scholarship, see James L. Crenshaw, "Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon 'Historical' Literature," p. 132.

Also in their perception of cosmic order, the wise attributed to *Ṣ^{e}dāqâh* the characteristic of beneficence, for cosmic order contained within its structure the generating force of blessing for those who followed the dictates of reality and, therefore, lived in harmony with the cosmos. In general then, the cosmos in its structured order was not hostile or alien to human existence, but, on the contrary, was structured for the beneficence of orderly existence. Wicked and evil things should not be so judged, says Sirach, for even the viper's fang has its purpose in the eradicating of wicked men. Thus the sage remarks in 39:25-27:

> From the beginning good things were created for good people,
> just as evil things for sinners.
> Basic to all the needs of man's life
> are water and fire and iron and salt

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[1] For an extensive discussion of retribution in wisdom literature, see Klaus Koch, "Gibt es ein Vergeltungsdogma im Alten Testament"? *ZThK*, LII (1955), 1-42.

And wheat flour and milk and honey,
    the blood of the grape, and oil and clothing.
All these are for good to the godly,
    just as they turn into evils for sinners.

Of course, the Hebrew sages believed that God was the creator of reality and the one who arranged the elements of the cosmos into a just, well-integrated complex, knitted together by order. The deity achieved this orderly cosmos by means of his own wisdom. Thus in Prov. 3:19-20, one sage proclaims:

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth;
    by understanding he established the heavens;
By his knowledge the deeps broke forth,
    and the clouds drop down the dew.

Because it was wisdom that enabled the deity to structure cosmic order, wisdom became the key to human cognition of cosmic order and the norms which regulated cosmic phenomena.[1] Thus those who become possessors of wisdom have the means by which to understand the interworkings of cosmic order, to analyze the divinely instituted cosmic laws, and to achieve the basis for orderly existence within the cosmos, for the wise man is empowered to know his own place, function, and time within the spheres of order.

Wisdom and God

The sages held to the theological affirmation of God as the creator deity who in his creation established order as the permeating

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[1] The affirmation of the sages that wisdom originated with God and was given by the creator to mankind is one element which points to the authoritative stance of wisdom literature, thus disproving the attempts of some scholars to regard wisdom as simply "good advice" which one may or may not follow. For the authoritative stance of wisdom, see James L. Crenshaw, Prophetic Conflict, BZAW, CXXIV (Berlin:

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force of cosmic reality, and, as we shall see momentarily, of society and mankind as well. Thus, theologically speaking, God as creator is the central view of God in the thinking of the sages.[1]

Because order was given the basic connotation of justice, the wise also considered the deity to be characterized by justice and to function as the just overseer of his creation by means of the principle of retribution. It was he who maintained the just functioning of reality and who blessed or destroyed those who lived within his creation according to their behavior. Thus in the first speech of Eliphaz, this traditional sage remarks to Job in 4:7-9:

> Think now, who that was innocent ever perished?
>   Or where were the upright cut off?
> As I have seen, those who plow iniquity
>   and sow trouble reap the same.
> By the breath of God they perish,
>   and by the blast of his anger they are consumed.

Of course, when order was no longer perceived by the wise, and when the dogma of retribution was controverted in the arena of human experience, the theological structure of the wise began to crumble. In Israel we find this crisis following the decimation of the state when voices are raised against the concepts of just order, retribution, and theodicy. Thus wisdom enters into its crisis stage, and the critical wise devastate the sapiential heritage of their ancestors. Job and Koheleth no longer are able to perceive a just order permeating

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Walter de Gruyter, 1971), pp. 116-23.

[1] See Walther Zimmerli, "The Place and Limit of the Wisdom in the Framework of the Old Testament Theology," SJTh, XVII (1964), 146-148.

reality nor are they able to validate the principle of retribution. And in theological terms God is still perceived to be the creator, but he either is stripped of the mask of righteousness (Job), or becomes the *Deus absconditus*, hidden to human understanding, but certainly a power to be feared (Koheleth).[1]

Wisdom and Society

The Israelite sages also perceived society to be divinely constructed and provided with norms for its institutions. In other words the creator deity permeated society with societal order, thus making the Israelite society the microcosm of world order. The divine ordering of society may best be seen in the institution of kingship, for the royal institution was established by the creator for the primary purpose of maintaining societal order in the areas of law, the military, fertility, and cult.[2] The purpose of kingship in terms of maintaining societal order may be seen in several wisdom sayings which speak of the king's throne as founded upon order (*Ṣᵉdāqâh*).

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[1] The absence of theological views involving God as the Lord of Salvation History in wisdom literature before Sirach has always been most perplexing. Efforts to view the early wise as secularistic humanists who functioned within an international setting devoid of doctrinaire theologies fail to take into consideration the fact that the concepts of order as justice, God as creator, and God as the overseer of the principle of retribution point to a religious,theological foundation to wisdom thinking, and that the wise of the major cultures of the ancient Near East, at least with respect to cult, do engage in certain cultic ideas and practices which are unique to their own cultures. We believe that such a problem requires some involved research and reflective thought before any definite conclusions may be drawn.

[2] Schmid, *Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung*.

Hellmut Brunner, in a most perceptive article, has argued that these sayings found in Prov. 16:12 and 20:28 are paralleled in certain Egyptian texts which point to the pedestal of the royal throne as the Ürhugel upon which the creator deity stood when he created the world and established Ma'at as the constitutive order of reality. In fact the same hieroglyph is used for Ma'at and the royal pedestal. Brunner believes such texts in Egypt and Israel point to a commonly shared view that the royal institutions had the primary responsibility for maintaining order within their respective societies.[1]

The divine gift which enabled the king to maintain societal order was the charismatic endowment of wisdom. A number of texts point to this, including the legendary account of Solomon's request for and reception of the gift of wisdom from God:

> Give thy servant therefore an understanding mind to govern this thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to govern this, thy great people.[2]

A similar text is found in Isa. 11:1-11 in the depiction of the ideal king who is described as one who rules justly by means of certain charismatic gifts, among which is the "spirit of wisdom."

Therefore, the ideal of a just and orderly society is an intimate part of the views of the wise, and it is kingship, divinely ordained and guided by the divine gift of wisdom, that must insure the order of Israelite society, and that leads the society into a beneficent relationship with the cosmos, resulting in the well-being of the society.

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[1] "Gerechtigkeit als Fundament des Thrones," VT, VIII (1958), 426-428.

[2] I Kgs. 3:9. The expression for wisdom in this text is literally "a hearing heart." Once more Brunner has undertaken to explain this phrase by means of Egyptian sapiential parallels in which the heart was seen to be the receptacle for wisdom and which initiated wise decisions. A fool was considered to be one who was "without heart." ("Das hörende Herz," ThLZ, LXXIX (1954), 697-700.

Wisdom and Mankind

The sages of Israel also come to speak of anthropological order, often referred to in terms of "the way" or "the path" which men who sought to live in harmony with the beneficent spheres of world order were to follow. This anthropological order contained divinely instituted norms which were to regulate the behavior of the followers of wisdom. Those who followed the dictates of orderly existence, whether they concern the correct behavior with respect to the proper social etiquette or whether they involve the ethical responsibility of caring for the impoverished and destitute, were considered to belong to one of two anthropological categories which the wise constructed: the religio-ethical category of the righteous (צדיקים). However, those who, either by ignorance or willful disdain, failed to follow the norms of sagacious behavior were placed within the religio-ethical category of the wicked (רשעים), who by means of their own actions were planting the seeds for eventual destruction and removal from society. Those who possess wisdom have the key to understanding the norms for correct anthropological behavior, and thus may develop the proper decorum which leads to their own well-being. Thus one sage exclaims in Prov. 3:13-18:

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Happy is the man who finds wisdom,
    and the man who gets understanding,
For the gain from it is better than gain from silver
    and its profit better than gold.
She is more precious than jewels,
    and nothing you desire can compare with her.
Long life is in her right hand;
    in her left hand are riches and honor.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
    and her paths are peace.
She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;
    those who hold her fast are called happy.

Wisdom and the Sages

Though we find manifold expressions of the wise with respect to many of their concerns, unfortunately they rarely speak of themselves, their professions, their tasks, the institutions to which they may have belonged; in other words, how they viewed their own places, functions, and times within the orders of reality. This reticence, inexplicable as it may seem, is especially true of the sages who functioned within pre-exilic society. We find them speaking about the court, farming, legal jurisprudence, and, as we shall argue, even the cult, but are we to conclude that this makes them royal courtiers, farmers, judges, and priests? Furthermore, may we say that the wise could legitimately be described as a movement with a common profession and a commonly shared _Standesethik_? This may be the case, but it remains for broad and penetrating assessments by scholars who heretofore have too easily acquiesced to impressive theories concerning the profession and function of the wise, but which are often devoid of textual evidence.[1] Thus in seeking any possible description of the pre-exilic wise in ancient Israel, we shall have to step outside the boundaries of wisdom literature, if that is possible in a time when "everything under the sun" reeks of wisdom ideas, language, and influence.

In examining certain non-wisdom texts such as the Joseph Narrative, the Succession Document, the Deuteronomistic redacted Books of Kings, and the prophetical books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, we are presented with depictions of sages who found their primary locus in the royal court where they functioned as a professional class of royal bureaucrats, counsellors, military generals, judges, and diplomats; in other words they are presented as the "Men of the King." As such, they were delegated the tasks of serving as agents of the king in carrying out his divine commission to establish and protect societal order within the Israelite kingdom. This is true with respect to Joseph, Ahitophel, Hushai, the wise woman of Tekoa, the wise woman of Abel of Bethma'acah, the wise mentioned in Isaiah and Jeremiah, and Baruch, the scribe of Jeremiah, who was an intimate associate of the royal officials in Jerusalem. But again we are depending upon non-sapiential texts for such a depiction of the wise, though in approaching these texts, we would argue that supportable

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[1] Such important questions have been raised by Crenshaw in his cogent overview of wisdom literature ("Prolegomenon," Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom [New York: Ktav, forthcoming 1975], pp. 20-22).

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evidence should be indicated that will contradict the depiction of the pre-exilic sages as "Men of the King," rather than arguing that because the sages themselves do not speak of their own duties and functions we must maintain a skeptical view of depictions in non-sapiential texts.

If the pre-exilic sages found their locus in the royal court, and again the evidence for such is non-sapiential, it is plausible that the training of such sages took place within the context of a royal school, though here we move from the realm of limited evidence to that of non-existent evidence, making the theory of royal schools pure speculation.[1] Even so, comparable literature from the other cultures of the ancient Near East was composed within the structure of schools which were also used for the training of bureaucrats and officials, and it does seem reasonable to suggest that for the practical functioning of the kingdom of Israel, and,early on, even a small but important empire, trained officials were necessitated, and it would seem plausible to suggest that such training occurred within a royal school which was partially responsible for the creating of wisdom literature.

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[1] Among those who have argued for a school in ancient Israel are D. Dr. Lorenz Dürr, Das Erziehungswesen im Alten Testament und im Alten Orient, MVAG, XXXVI (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1932); Wolfgang Richter, Recht und Ethos, StANT, XV (Müchen: Kösel Verlag, 1966); and Hermisson, Studien zur Israelitischen Spruchweisheit, WMANT, XXVIII (Neukirch-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag), pp. 97-132. For a cautious critique of the arguments for the existence of wisdom schools, see R. N. Whybray, The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament, BZAW, CXXXV (1974), 33-43.

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We are on more steady ground when we come to examine certain sages of the late post-exilic period, for in this time we find sages who are obviously no longer functionaries of a non-existent royal institution, but rather, at least with regard to Sirach, teachers in a school with circles of disciples, though whether or not such schools were connected to the central temple is impossible conclusively to say. Yet it may be reasonably argued that the sages, at least by the time of Sirach, found a new locus to replace kingship, and that was the torah, for the law of God became the possession of the wise who were concerned with its proper interpretation and formulation into rules for sapiential existence. Now it is interesting, in this connection, to point to the Chronicler's interpretation of Ezra, for he makes this Jewish official who functioned as the Minister of Jewish Religion in the Persian empire a "scribe of Torah."[1] One could conceivably see in this depiction of Ezra the model of the post-exilic sage, at least in the eyes of the Chronicler, and certainly such would correspond with the picture we have of Sirach. Once more, however, the purpose and function of the sage is to extend the orders of reality into the social and anthropological spheres, only in the case of the post-exilic sage, this is done by the study of torah and the following of its dictates by his society. In other words, society is to be based upon the correct norms of orderly existence found embedded within the torah of God.

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[1] H. H. Schaeder, Ezra der Schreiber, BHT, V (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1930).

B. The Views of Cult in Israelite Wisdom Literature

Proverbs 1-9

Introduction. Proverbs 1-9 is one of eight major collections[1] found within the Book of Proverbs,[2] and contains diverse types[3] of sapiential materials, including instructions,[4] wisdom poems,[5] and different kinds of proverbs,[6] redacted in a compact collection and introduced by a superscription in 1:1 which translates: "The Proverbs of Solomon, Son of David, King of Israel." Until recently, it was commonly asserted that this collection and its contents were the latest proverbial material, appearing in the late Post-Exile.[1] Such an assertion has been based on the following arguments. The first argument involves the appearance of what were described as rather lengthy forms in the collection, and, since it had been assumed that there was a gradual development from simple, laconic forms (e.g., the one line proverb) to more developed ones, this superabundance of developed, lengthy forms supported a late origin.[2] The second argument centers on certain theological ideas which were believed appropriate for the Post-Exile: the personification of wisdom, thought to betray Greek influence, the role of wisdom as mediator between man and a transcendent deity, the appearance of wisdom as a prophetess, evidence of the growing nationalization of wisdom, including the stress on the "fear of the Lord," and the close relationship of the collection to Sirach in forms and theology.[3]

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[1] Georg Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), pp. 318-19. The major sections, discernible by means of the superscriptions with the exception of the last one, are: 1-9 ("The Proverbs of Solomon"), 10:1-22:16 ("The Proverbs of Solomon"), 22:17-24:22 ("The Words of the Wise"), 24:23-34 ("These also are Sayings of the Wise"), 25-29 ("These also are Proverbs of Solomon which the Men of Hezekiah, King of Judah,Compiled"), 30 ("The Words of Agur, son of Jakeh of Massa"); 31:1-9 ("The Words of Lemuel, King of Massa, which his Mother taught him"), and 31:10-31 (no superscription).

[2] The life situation for the collections is difficult to ascertain specifically. However, we adhere to the position that the collections were meant for instructional purposes within the locus of court and temple schools, and were used to teach young students the intricacies of sapiential language, style, and forms, giving them exercises in analytical, empirical, and comparative thinking, and indoctrinating them in general sapiential ideas (see Bernhard Lang, Die Weisheitliche Lehrrede (Stuttgart: KBW Verlage, [1972], p. 36).

[3] For a recent analysis of sapiential forms, see James Crenshaw, "Wisdom," Old Testament Form Criticism (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974), pp. 225-264.

[4] For an excellent analysis of the instruction genre, see Lang, op. cit. The instructions found in Proverbs 1-9 are 1:8-19, 2:1-22, 3:1-12, 3:21-35, 4:1-9, 4:10-19, 4:20-27, 5:1-23, 6:20-35, 7:1-27 (Ibid., p. 29).

[5] Wisdom poems include the poem structured around an 'ashrê saying in 3:13-18, the poetic speeches of personified wisdom in 1:20-33, 8:1-21, 8:22-31, the poem contrasting wisdom and folly in 9:1-6 and 13-18, and the hymnic fragment in 3:19-20.

[6] E.g., 9:7, 10, and the numerical saying in 6:16-19.

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[1] Roland Murphy, "The Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs," Interp, XX (1966), 4; Georg Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 219; and Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament An Introduction (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 473. Skehan has argued that the author of Chapters 1-9 is the editor of the rest of the Book of Proverbs ("A Single Editor for the Whole Book of Proverbs," CBQ, X (1948), 115-130.

[2] Otto Eissfeldt, Der Maschal im AT, BZAW, XXIV (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1913).

[3] Among others, see Berend Gemser, Sprüche Salomos, HAT, XVI (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1963), 5; and Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 219.

The third argument centers on the language and style of the collection which was said to have been influenced by Greek literature, especially as pertains to the length of sentences,[1] and by Deutero-Isaiah, Deuteronomy, and the Deuteronomistic redaction.[2]

However, recent scholarship has dismissed as erroneous or at least as questionable many of these arguments used to buttress a post-exilic dating. The form-critical argument is based upon the erroneous assumption that there is a slow and perceivable development of forms from more simple to more complex ones, and upon the failure to recognize that Proverbs 1-9 contains ten "instructions," a form which existed in Egypt as early as the period of the Old Kingdom.[3] The occurrence of wisdom peoms in this collection cannot be adduced as evidence for lateness, since such are apparent in much older ancient Near Eastern wisdom sources, and since, as we shall demonstrate in Chapter V, the Israelite wise were writing wisdom poems in the pre-exilic period. In addition Christa Bauer-Kayatz has argued cogently that the wisdom figure in Proverbs 8 and 9 is influenced neither by a prophetic model nor by Greek hypostatization, but rather by the speeches of Egyptian goddesses, especially divine Ma'at, and, since Egyptian influence was most prevalent during the Solomonic period, it is probable that such speeches could occur during this very early period.[1] In addition, she demonstrates that the assumed influence by the prophets upon the wisdom literature could just as well be reversed, i.e., the wise may have influenced the prophetic language and thought.[2] The theological argument involving the idea that personification is a late development ignores other examples of personification in Israelite literature coming from the pre-exilic age: the personification of Israel as the bride of Yahweh, death (e.g. Ps. 49:15f.), and the hypostatization of the angel of the Lord at least as early as E (Gen. 21:17; 31:11, and Ex. 14:19).[3] The transcendent deity in Proverbs 1-9 conforms completely with the general picture of deity in wisdom thought, that is, the deity is primarily a transcendent creator and guarantor of retribution, and not the Lord of Salvation History. Added to this is the counter theological argument which observes the absence of salvation history themes in the collection which are present in Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon. The idea that the collection is late, since it exudes a deeper sense of piety as may be seen in the stress on "the fear of the Lord," overlooks or conveniently excises the occurrences of such a phrase in the other proverbial collections (10:27, 14:26,27, 15:16, etc.), and is based upon the disputable thesis that the early wise were non-religious, secular, career-oriented, statesmen who functioned with a radicalized intellectual empiricism, and who would not tolerate doctrinaire, chauvinistic theologies.[1]

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[1] Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 219.

[2] A. Robert, "Les attaches littéraires bibliques de Prov. I-IX," RB, XLIV (1935), 44-65.

[3] McKane, Proverbs, p. 5; Bauer-Kayatz, Studien zu Proverbien 1-9, WMANT, XXII (Neukirchener Verlag, 1966), 3.

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[1] Bauer Kayatz, Studien zu Proverbien 1-9, pp. 15f.

[2] Bauer Kayatz, Studien zu Proverbien 1-9, pp. 119-20. Others have argued that the wise have influenced the prophets: James L. Crenshaw, "The Influence of the Wise upon Amos," ZAW, LXXIX (1967), 42-52; Samuel Terrien, "Amos and Wisdom," Israel's Prophetic Heritage (New York: Harper Row, 1962), 108-15; J. Lindblom, "Wisdom in the Old Testament Prophets," SVT III, (1955), 193-204; and H. W. Wolff, Amos geistige Heimat, WMANT, XVIII (Neukirchener Verlag, 1964).

[3] See Ringgren, Word and Wisdom.

The question of dating does have some consequence for our investigation, since the references to cult in this collection could be argued to be the result of a post-exilic spirit which includes a growing awareness of nationalistic emphases which would encompass cultic concerns supposedly not in evidence in earlier wisdom. Since most of the arguments for a post-exilic dating can be negated, we tend to accept a pre-exilic dating following the arguments of Bauer-Kayatz, and would add other arguments including the absence of aramaisms, salvation history, and an emphasis upon Torah as the source of wisdom.[1] It is especially striking that there are no references to Torah in this section in view of the probable thesis that in Ezra one finds a model of the fifth century sage whose primary emphasis is study and interpretation of Torah, the true source of wisdom according to Sirach (39:1).

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[1] McKane, Prophets and Wise Men, p. 48. We are not contesting the thesis that there is a growing nationalization within the structure of wisdom thought that eventually leads to an embracing of salvation history and the Torah as the only true source of wisdom. However, we do find ourselves in direct conflict with the thesis that the early wise somehow were radical empiricists engaged in a statecraft that did not lend itself to doctrinaire theologies. Wisdom is predicated upon what can be only described as theological affirmations well beyond the limits of an empirical epistemology. Ideas of a world order with a moral bent made to permeate creation by the creator deity and of a process of retribution overseen by the transcendent deity are theological affirmations! Further, to characterize the early wise as unconcerned with religion, and therefore, "fear of God," involves a complete ignoring of certain texts including the texts cited above from Proverbs which are pre-exilic, the pious Job of the Old Folktale, and certain historical texts which, if not sapiential, at least are written with sapiential characters playing key character roles: Joseph in the Joseph Narrative rises to the position of vizier in Egypt as the result of his "fear of God" (see G. von Rad, "The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom," The Problem of the Hexateuch [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966], pp. 292-300), and the royal novella

Proverbs 3:9-10. The third instruction in Proverbs 1-9 (3:1-12)[2] is an instruction given to schoolboys to incorporate within their

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found in I Kgs. 3 and originating during Solomon's reign portrays a humble, pious Solomon whose prayer for wisdom is answered not only in the gift of wisdom, but also in his receiving of the blessings associated with the one who is truly wise. That the latter text originated in the reign of Solomon can be argued on the basis that it was written along the lines of an Egyptian political document for the purpose of underpining the Solomonic claim to the throne (S. Herrmann, "Die Königsnovelle in Ägypten und Israel," Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift Universitäts Leipzig, III (1953-54), 51-62; E. Otto, "Geschichtliche Literatur: Analistik und Königsnovelle," HO I (1952), 144; and R. N. Whybray, The Succession Narrative, SBT, IX (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1968), 100.

[1] It is also possible to regard the final redaction as post-exilic, and much of the contents as originating in sapiential circles several centuries before that.

[2] Lang, op. cit., pp. 29f. The form of the instruction includes: 1. the address clothed in either the vetitive or imperative mood, directed to the "son" to hear the instruction of the teacher and not to forget or ignore the instruction, and including on occasion the buttressing of the address by the addition of a motivation clause (vv. 1-2); 2. the main section consisting of a list of admonitions in the imperative, prohibitive, or vetitive forms, often individually coupled with consequential or motivation clauses stressing the outcome or the reasons behind such admonitions (vv. 3-10); and 3. the conclusions presented in the third person, indicating the results of wise or unwise behavior (vv. 11-12).

hearts "the fear of the Lord,"[1] which involved subjection of will, reverence, piety, and trust in the deity who is the ultimate source of wisdom, for he was believed to guide the god-fearer in the correct course of behaviour that would result in blessing and well-being. This instruction includes an admonition for cultic participation in vv. 9-10:

> Honor[2] the Lord with your prosperity and with the first fruits of all your produce,[3]
> So that your barns will be filled with grain,[4] and your wine vats will burst with new wine.

The form of vv. 9-10 is that of the admonition (v. 9), followed by two consequential clauses stating the benefits derived from adhering to the admonition.[5] The content involves the participation in the presentation of "first fruits" to the Lord, an activity taking place during the major agricultural festivals (Unleavened Bread--the barley harvest; Weeks--the wheat harvest; and Tents--the vintage harvest).[1] The cultic understanding of the presentation of first fruits to the cultic officials in the holy place sees the offering, not as a gift to the deity, but rather as a desacralization of the agricultural produce which belonged in its entirety to the deity, and was therefore sacred. By returning to the deity the first and presumably the best of the crop the remainder was desacralized and subsequently could be used for profane consumption.[2] The presentation of first fruits was also a part of Israelite social legislation, since the first fruits were to be eaten by cultic personnel who served in the cultic centers.[3] In addition it is well known that during these agrarian festivals taking place in Israel during the cultic year the community celebrated and re-experienced the benefits of salvation history which were associated with these festivals perhaps as early as the time of the

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[1] See S. Plath, *Furcht Gottes* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1962), pp. 54f.

[2] כבד (Piel) is found in cultic contexts which indicate that one "honors" the deity with cultic offerings (Isa. 43:23, Jg. 13:17).

[3] תבואה is a general term and may refer to "revenue," "income" (Prov. 10:16, 14:4) in general, though the probable meaning in this context is "agricultural produce," since "grain" and "new wine" are mentioned in the two following consequential clauses (cf. Ex. 23:10, Lev. 19:25, 23:39).

[4] שבע, "plenty," "satiety," has often been emended (e.g. *BH*[3]) to שבר, "corn" or "grain" on the basis of the LXX (σίτῳ). However Dahood has pointed to a Phoenician parallel which reads *śb'wtrs*, "grain and new wine" (the Karatepe Inscription III, 7, 9. *Proverbs and Northwest-Semitic Philology* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), p. 9).

[5] Roland Murphy, "Form Criticism and Wisdom Literature," *CBQ*, XXXI (1969), p. 480.

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[1] The cultic legislation concerning "first-fruits" is found in the Covenant Code (Ex. 23:19), the so-called Ritual Decalogue (Ex. 34:26), D (Dt. 26:1-11), and P (Lev. 23:1-44). General references to "produce" (תבואה), "grain" (שבע), and "new wine" (תירוש) suggest that the three agricultural festivals which involved the offering of various kinds of "first-fruits" are being referred to, and not a specific festival, though of course, the Feast of Weeks was regarded as the festival of first fruits *par excellence*, and was sometimes referred to as בכורים (See Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, II [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965], 490f).

[2] J. Morgenstern, "First Fruits," *IDB*, II (1964), p. 270; H.-J. Kraus, *Worship in Israel* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966), p. 117; and H. H. Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 135-36.

[3] II Kgs. 4:42-44, Num. 12:44f., Lev. 23:20, Num. 13:8f. That the wise, most of whom came from the upper stratum of Israelite society, were concerned for the poor and economically deprived in Israelite society has been recognized for quite some time (see Robert Gordis, "The Social Background of Wisdom Literature," *HUCA*, XVII [1944], 77-118).

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tribal federation.[1]

The motivation for participation in the presentation of the first fruits given by our sage is that of blessing which will come to the participant as a result of his cultic observance,[2] a blessing in the form of increased harvests and agricultural yields, and as such was given a wisdom intonation involving the principle of retribution, or what the Germans term Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang, the idea that a particular deed leads to a certain result, a process that is controlled and overseen by the deity.[3] By observing the sage's admonition, the wise student will incorporate himself within the beneficent spheres of cosmic, social, and cultic order established and maintained by the deity for the blessing of the righteous. While it is impossible to determine if the sage is concerned either with the cultic understanding of first fruits and the celebration of salvation history during the agrarian festivals or with the social concern for cultic personnel, what is obvious is that the sage and his students are seen as functioning members of the cultic community.[4]

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[1] De Vaux, Ancient Israel, II, 484f. See especially Dt. 26:1-11.

[2] The blessing derived from the observance of the regulations concerning first fruits is also found in cultic contexts (Ezek. 44:30).

[3] Bauer-Kayatz, Einführung in die alttestamentliche Weisheit (Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), p. 30.

[4] Lang comments concerning the third instruction: "Lehrer und Schüler sind selbstverstandliche Teilnehmer am Kult Israels " (op. cit., p. 82).

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The Strange Woman. The complex of material centering around the controversial motif of the "Strange Woman" has significance for our investigation, especially so if Boström's thesis that she is to be identified as a devotee of a fertility goddess possesses cogent argumentation.[1] The "Strange Woman" occupies the central position of concern in four instructions (2:1-22, 5:1-23, 6:24-35, and 7:1-27), and one didactic poem (9:1-6, 13-17). In each case she is depicted as a seductress whose sexual promiscuity leads to the entrapment of wisdom students, and the result of such a liaison is graphically depicted as "death." According to the wise teachers, the avoidance of such a liaison and the dreadful consequences to which such an affair leads rests in the devotion of the young students to wisdom which, at times, is personified as a beautiful seductress herself, and as a fertility goddess, though the intended contrast between the "Strange Woman" and wisdom is that the latter leads to life. In approaching this complex of sapiential material, the primary task is to identify as specifically as possible the "Strange Woman," no easy task in itself as may be concluded from the many differences of opinion among wisdom scholars,[2] and by the fact that adultery,

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[1] Gustav Boström, Proverbiastudien, Lunds Universitets Arsskrift, N. F. Avd. 1, Bd. 30, Nr. 33 (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1935).

[2] Boström's thesis has found support from rather prominent scholars, including Ringgren, Word and Wisdom, and R. B. Y. Scott, Proverbs. Ecclesiastes, AB, XVIII (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965). However critics of the thesis include Roland Murphy ("The Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs," Interp, XX [1966], 8f.) and Berend Gemser, (Sprüche Salomos, pp. 6, 26).

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prostitution, and fertility rites were lumped together in the Israelite literature, since the three different subjects were activities involving illicit sexual behavior. The "Strange Woman" has been interpreted as an Israelite or foreign adulteress,[1] prostitute, fertility priestess, or devotee of a fertility goddess (Anat, Astarte, Ishtar); as a prostitute-magician mentioned in the Maqlu series of Assyrian oaths;[2] and as a literary personification of folly who is contrasted to the personification of wisdom. Let us begin our attempts to identify this rather perplexing figure by examining each individual pericope devoted to this enigmatic female.

The first mention of the "Strange Woman" (אשה זרה and נכריה)[3] is found in the second instruction, 2:1-22, which involves a teacher admonishing his students to seek wisdom, for a successful quest will preserve them from the menace of evil men and the "Strange Woman." In this instruction, the "Strange Woman" is described as possessing "seductive speech" (אמריה החליקה), as one who "deserts the husband of her youth" (העזבת אלוף נעוריה), and as one who "forgets the covenant of her god" (ואת־ברית אלהיה שכחה). Such a description best fits an Israelite adulteress who is unfaithful to her husband, and thus breaks the covenant commandment prohibiting adultery. It is possible, however, to regard the "Strange Woman" in this context as a married Israelite woman who either has turned to prostitution in order to support herself or has become a fertility devotee or priestess who, as a sacral functionary, is supported within the structure of the community of the cult by receiving her share of the offerings. Such a cultic dimension of adultery could be strengthened by the possible translation of v. 18:

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[1] Ani refers to a foreign adulteress who should be avoided by the wise in terms quite similar to the "Strange Woman":

> Be on thy guard against a woman from abroad, who is not known in her (own) town. Do not stare at her when she passes by. Do not know her carnally: a deep water, whose windings one knows not, a woman who is far away from her husband. "I am sleek," she says to thee every day. She has not witnesses when she waits to ensnare thee. It is a great crime (worthy) of death, when one hears of it... (iii, 13f.; ANET, p. 420).

[2] O. Keel, Feinde und Gottesleugner, SBM, VII (Stuttgart, 1967). Keel's thesis carries little conviction, as Lang has demonstrated in his arguments. Lang has pointed out that there is no evidence that the woman of the Maqlu series is a prostitute, and that "death" in chapter 7 is brought about by illicit sexual behavior and not by magic (Die Weisheitliche Lehrrede, p. 94).

[3] Little precision can be gained from word studies of זרה and נכריה. זרה may mean "one who is estranged" from his society (Job 19:15), a "stranger" in the sense of one who belongs to another family (Dt. 25:5), tribe (Num. 1:51), nation (Hos. 7:9), and one whose soico-religious behavior transgresses the commonly accepted sanctions of the community. Thus the "strange woman" in Proverbs could be a foreigner who is an adulteress, a prostitute, a fertility devotee, or a foreign goddess; or an Israelite adulteress, prostitute,

> For her temple[1] bows[2] down to Mot,
> And her courts[3] to the Rephaim.[4]

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or fertility devotee. נכריה is a synonym of זרה and may refer to a foreigner or a foreign group (Dt. 17:15, I Kgs. 11:1, 8), an Israelite prostitute (Prov. 23:27), and a stranger in the sense of one who is unfamiliar (Ec. 6:2). For a detailed analysis, see L. A. Snijders, "The Meaning of זר in the Old Testament," OTS, X (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), 1-154.

[1] בית may mean "temple" (I Kgs. 6, and Ugaritic bt).

[2] Reading שחה as coming from שחה, "to bow down" (Isa. 51:23).

[3] The possible translation of משגלה as "court" is based on the occurrence of the word in I Sam. 17:20 and 26:5, 7 in which the word refers to an encampment with a definite perimeter, thus an enclosure.

[4] The "Rephaim" in Ugarit were not only the "shades" of the

But the terms for "prostitute" (זונה) and "sacred harlot" (קדשה) are not found, thus making the identity of the "Strange Woman" in this context as a prostitute or temple harlot rather tenuous.

The eighth instruction (5:1-23) is devoted entirely to the "Strange Woman" who is described as one whose "lips drip honey," and whose "mouth is smoother than oil," metaphors which succeed not only in depicting in metaphorically seductive terms an enticing woman, but also in describing the seductress in literary images which are associated with the specific types of payment made to prostitutes and temple priestesses.[1] Once more a liaison with her leads the young fool to death, a fate that is given a certain vividness in v. 5, an old crux, which we argue is best translated:

> Her sexual organs descend upon Mot,
> Her aroused vagina embraces Sheol.[2]

If the "Strange Woman" is a paid prostitute in this context, then vv. 7-11 would refer to the young man's wasting of his life's resources in the misspent life of a profligate who squanders the resources of

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dead, but at times were also chthonic deities (John Gray, "The Rephaim," *PEQ*, LXXXIV [1949], 127-39).

[1] Ezek. 16:19f. UT 49: III:12f., a text celebrating Baal's resurrection, reads:

šmm. šmn. tmṭrn	The heavens rain oil
nḫhm. tlk. nbtm	The wadis run with honey

Thus "oil and honey" are intimately connected with fertility religion.

[2] Translating צעדים and, רגלים as "feet" and "steps" faces the difficulty of the verb יתמכו "to embrace." But by regarding these terms as euphemisms, the problem is resolved. רגלים has long been recognized as a euphemism for "sexual organs" (cf. Ezek. 16:25). צעדים may be translated "aroused vagina" upon the basis of its parallelism with רגלים and its association with the Ugaritic *sǵd*, "to make an erection" (Aistleitner, no. 2339).

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his family which are enjoyed by those outside his familial social unit. However, if one should regard her as a fertility prostitute, then בית נכרי should be translated "Strange Temple" (v. 10), and פתח ביתה (v. 8) as "door of her temple." Finally, the "strangers" who are the recipients of the young man's wealth and labors could be regarded as sacred functionaries within a fertility cult. But again we are speculating, for the text contains nothing that would allow us to decide whether or not she is to be regarded as a prostitute for hire or as a temple priestess.

We are more fortunate in the ninth instruction (6:20-35), most of which concerns the "Strange Woman," for in this case she is easily identified as an Israelite adulteress, since she is referred to as an אשת רע, "a neighbor's wife,"[1] an אשת איש ("another's wife") and a נאף אשה ("an adulterous woman"). Furthermore, a description of the wrath of a cuckolded husband is presented (vv. 29-35). Finally, the price paid to a prostitute, (זונה), "a loaf of bread," is contrasted to the price an adulterer must pay, namely his life (v. 26).

Thus far a cultic interpretation of the "Strange Woman" has been difficult to prove, but in the tenth instruction, 7:1-27, we find material more conducive to a specifically cultic identification. In this instruction, the teacher instructs the young student to cultivate a love for Mistress Wisdom (v. 4) who will preserve him from the seduction of the "Strange Woman" (v. 5).[1] Verses 6-7 present a difficult textual problem, for, depending on which textual tradition one follows, these verses describe either "Mistress Wisdom" or the "Strange Woman." In following the MT, which has the first person (אבינה, נשקפתי, אשנתי, ביתי), one could conclude that wisdom is personified as a fertility goddess who is observing the seduction of a young man, a wisdom student. However, if one follows the textual tradition represented by the LXX and the Syriac translations, which have the third person (תרא, נשקפה, אשנב, ביתה), then one would find in vv. 6-7 a description of the "Strange Woman." Now the intriguing description of this one "who looks out the lattice of the window" appears to be based upon a number of Phoenician ivory plaques found in Samaria, Arslan Tash, Nimrud, and Khorsabad which depict a fertility goddess looking through the lattice of her window, as well as the παρακυπτουσα of Cyprus.[2] Thus there is good evidence to support the position that vv. 6f. refer to a sacral priestess or a devotee of a fertility goddess who dresses in her sacral garb and takes to the streets in order to induce a young man to join her in fertility rites.[1] Verses 14-15 seem to support this interpretation. The woman says to the young man:

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[1] We prefer to read רָע with the LXX as רֵעַ "neighbor " in v. 24, since the same word is found in v. 29.

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[1] It is important to note in this discussion I Kgs. 11:1-8 which refers to the wives of Solomon as נכריות for whom he established non-Yahwistic cults. Among the gods Solomon is criticized for worshipping is the Canaanite goddess Astarte, indicating that Solomon participated in Canaanite fertility rites. If Weinfeld's controversial thesis is correct, that is, the Deuteronomistic History was the creation of the sages beginning their work before the time of Josiah, then this Deuteronomistic critique of Solomon for participating in Canaanite religion with his foreign wives may present us with a sapiential illustration of the warning issued by the sages in Proverbs 7 against participating in Canaanite fertility religion (Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1972)).

[2] The plaques are mentioned by Y. Aharoni, "Beth-Haccherim," Archaeology and Old Testament Study (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press), pp. 180f. He also points to a number of texts in the Old Testament (Jg. 5:28; II Sam. 6:16; II Kgs. 9:30) which refer to a queen looking

> I must offer communion sacrifices,
> Today I shall have fulfilled my vows.[2]
> Consequently, I have come forth to meet you,
> To seek you out, and I have found you.

The woman indicates that she is in the process of presenting communion sacrifices, a type of sacrifice in Israel and in Canaan which had as its purpose the ritualistic binding together of deity and communicants by means of a communion repast in which the deity, priestly officials, and the worshipper and guests share (Lev. 17:11-21; I Sam. 9:11-13;

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through the window, and to the excavations at Beth-Hakkerem in which was discovered a window with a lattice belonging to a royal palace.

[1] The cultic interpretation of the woman as a sacral prostitute of a fertility goddess would be strengthened if the *terminus technicus* for sacral prostitute, קדשה, had been used, though it is true that the general word for prostitute, זונה, which occurs here is sometimes used to refer to a sacral priestess (cf. Dt. 23:17-18). Gray has suggested that the temple prostitute in Canaan seems to have been referred to as *'enst*, "pleasant, sociable" (*The Legacy of Canaan*, SVT, V (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1957), p. 57). Now it is well known that the Hebrew word for "woman, wife," אשה, is derived from the same root word as the Ugaritic term for temple prostitute, *'ns*, the *nun* having suffered assimilation in אשה (cf. אנשים where the *nun* is maintained). It may not be too difficult to suppose that the description of אשה by the word זרה is the Hebrew method of referring to the Canaanite sacred prostitute so as to use the Canaanite term for sacred prostitute, and yet to be able to distinguish the term from the ordinary word for "woman, wife." Albright has referred to the cult of Aphrodite παρακυπτουσα in Cyprus (cf. Babylonian Ishtar *kililu*), and associates this with the ivory plaques ("Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom," *SVT*, III [1955], 10).

[2] We have regarded the perfect as pointing to an action that,

and Jer. 7:21).[1] In Israel after the "devouring" of the fat and intestines by the deity, certain pieces were presented to the cultic officials, and the remainder was eaten at home by the one making the offering and by the guests who are invited. That the meal at home was a sacral repast is seen in the fact that the participants had to be in a state of ritual purity. Furthermore, a specific type of communion sacrifice was the votive offering, involving the fulfillment of a vow after the deity had fulfilled his part of the obligation by granting the worshipper's request, and as such, with respect to the meal, the sacrifice had to be eaten on the day the sacrifice took place and on the following day, since whatever remained following that time became defiled and could not be eaten. Thus the woman has made a vow with her deity, and is now in the process of fulfilling her obligation by offering a communion sacrifice and participating in a communion meal. It appears, however, that her fulfillment of the vow involves also the engaging in fertility rites. Such fertility rites in Canaanite religion appear to have followed communion sacrifices (Ex. 32:1-6; Num. 25:1f.), and thus her statement to the young man to come home with her to engage in sexual intercourse is more than simple adultery, but rather is an invitation to participate with her

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in the mind of the woman, is as good as done (see R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967], pp. 32-33).

[1] For discussions of the communion sacrifice, see de Vaux, Ancient Israel, II, 417-18; and John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan, p. 141. See UH 1, 4; 9, 7.

in fertility religion. McKane has objected that, while the woman does seem to be a devotee of a fertility goddess, vv. 19-20 indicate that her husband is away from home, and therefore she seeks to engage a young man in an adulterous affair.[1] However, we would suggest that it appears that her husband is a merchant, since he has "gone on a long journey" with "a bag of money," and he is engaged in business pursuits during the time of the "waxing of the new moon," deemed a propitious time for successful business activities, and is going to return at כסא, the "full moon," a day considered to be a time of "good fortune," and thus most advantageous for difficult and dangerous travel back home.[2] Furthermore the period of the "waning of the moon" during the lunar cycle was to be a time of cessation from business activities.[3] Also it is possible that the sacred time in which she is engaged in her cultic activities is that of the "New Moon," the time when the moon makes its first appearance in the heavens, and, of course, a sacred time celebrated in Israel and in Canaan.[4] So in

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[1] McKane, Proverbs, p. 337. It should be stated that it was a common practice for temple prostitutes to be married (see "Counsels of Wisdom, ll. 72f.; "Middle Assyrian Laws," Tablet A, 40, ANET, p. 183; and Hosea's marriage to Gomer).

[2] De Vaux indicates that the day of the full moon, Akk. shapattu, was a "day of good omen" in Babylonia, a time when the gods' hearts were appeased (Ancient Israel, II, p. 476).

[3] Cf. John McKay, Religion in Judah under the Assyrians, SBT, 2nd. Series, XXVI (London: SCM Press, 1973), 115, footnote 87. He refers to texts pointing out that "if one works he will lose his money" and "one may not take an oath nor transact business" during the 14th and 15th of Nisan when the moon begins to wane.

[4] חדש, "New Moon," was celebrated in Israel as may be determined from such texts as Ps. 81:4, Ezek. 45:17, 46:1-6, etc.

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order to participate in the culmination of her sacral activities and to fulfill her vow, she needs a male partner, since her husband is away from home engaged in mercantile pursuits. So her statement concerning her husband's absence need not be seen as an attempt to engage in sexual activity objectionable to her husband, since even the marriage of temple prostitutes seems to have been common enough to require legislation, and since sacred fertility rites were seen as acceptable within the cultic sphere even for those who were married. Finally the ghastly description of the fate of those who had succumbed to her propositions seems to be a close reflection of the slaughter of men by the goddess Anat in Canaanite myth.[1] Thus we would argue that the woman in all likelihood is a devotee of an ancient Near Eastern fertility goddess, and is seeking to entice a young Israelite student into joining with her in the sexual worship of her goddess within the context of a communion repast. Thus this admonition involves not only a warning against illicit sexual behavior, but also specifically warns against participation by the wise in fertility religion.

The Canaanites also regarded the New Moon as a holy time (see UH 3; Gray, The Legacy of Canaan, p. 141).

[1] UH 'nt, II, 3f. It is quite obvious that the two sides to the personalities of the goddesses of the ancient Near East, especially Anat and Ishtar, were erotic love and destructive warfare and death. Thus, while the "Strange Woman" may be appealing in a sensual manner, she, like her divine prototype, brings men to destruction. Such a destruction by Anat may reflect human sacrifice in Canaan, though this is debatable. If it did occur, then the idea of such a sacrifice of men is the unleasing of the power of blood necessary to effect the resurrection of Baal from the underworld (see John Gray, Legacy of Canaan, pp. 36-37).

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The poem in chapter 9 contrasts Dame Wisdom (Strophe I, vv. 1-6) with Dame Folly, though both are depicted as fertility goddesses engaged in cultic activities. The poem is among the best artistically structured poems in Israelite wisdom literature, consisting of two strophes exhibiting external parallelism. Each strophe has 6 lines (12 hemistichs), and each line possess 3 + 3 meter.[1] In Strophe I, Dame Wisdom builds her seven pillared temple which is located on the acropolis of the city, prepares her cultic festival intended to initiate her new sanctuary, and then sends forth her priestesses to invite new cultic adherents to her festive meal. Those who accept the invitation will leave simpleness and gain insight, and as a result will find life. This depiction of Dame Wisdom, coupled with other

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[1] Wisdom's house (בית) has been interpreted in a variety of ways: the seven pillars represent the seven planets in Babylonian astrology which points to a connection with the cult of the Queen of Heaven, "Ishtar of the Stars," (Boström, op. cit., p. 160); pillars of a temple similar to the 45 pillars mentioned in the Solomonic temple (I Kgs. 7:2-8); Sennacheribs's New Year's house at Asshur which had pillars placed in rows of seven (Meissner, Babylonien und Assyrien, I, 308); a "house of instruction;" a large aristocratic house similar to large Phoenician houses of the late third millennium B.C. which had seven interior pillars (M. Dunand, "La Maison de la Sagesse," Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth, IV (1940), 69-84); and a temple similar to the shrine dedicated to the Cyprian Aphrodite which was called the "Shrine of the Seven-inside-the-Stelae" (mentioned by Albright, "Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom," p. 9, who compares such to the seven menhirs found at Bāb edh-Dhrâ' from the end of the third millennium). We prefer the interpretation that the "house" of wisdom is a temple, since in addition to the parallels listed by Albright, the temple is located on the acropolis (מרמי קרת) where temples are normally constructed in Israel and Canaan, the sending out of maidens compares to the sending out of fertility priestesses by a goddess (cf. Ezek. 23:24), the sacrifices and the meal prepared by wisdom are probably within the context of a festival dedicating her new temple (cf. UH 51 which describes the dedicatory festival held by Baal following the construction of his new temple), and the

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similar texts in 8:1-21 and 8:22-31, borrows heavily in terms of form from first person speeches attributed to certain ancient Near Eastern goddesses who engage in self-praise (Inanna, Ishtar, Ma'at, Isis).[1] However, are we to assume that wisdom is an actual goddess to be worshipped, or is this either an example of the hypostatization of wisdom in which a former attribute of Yahweh is now given independent, personal existence, or an example of literary personification?[2] With regard to the mythological theory that regards wisdom as an actual goddess, there is no doubt that the form of the speech of wisdom in chapter 8 is heavily influenced by the form of divine speeches, especially Egyptian goddesses, nor is there any doubt that the characteristics attributed to wisdom in these texts are borrowed from descriptions of ancient Near Eastern goddesses of fertility and wisdom.[3] Further, gods and goddesses of order and wisdom in the

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fact that the invitation in v. 5 appears to be almost a verbatim quote from a cultic text from Ugarit which is found in the context of a cultic meal participated in by the gods of fertility: UT 52, 6: *lḫm. blḥm ay wšty. bḫmr yn ay*. Furthermore, the offer of "life" to the participants parallels the ideology of fertility religion in which fertility religion was the means to revitalize the forces of life of the society.

[1] Cf. Bauer-Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1-9*; H. Donner, "Die religionsgeschichtlichen Ursprünge von Prov. Sal. 8, 22-31," *ZAS*, LXXXII (1957), 8-18; Burton Mack, "Wisdom Myth and Mythology," *Interp*, XXIV (1970), 46-60; Gemser, *Sprüche Salomos*; and Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom*.

[2] For an excellent summary and analysis, see R. N. Whybray, *Wisdom in Proverbs*, SBT, XLV (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1955), pp. 72-104.

[3] Cf. especially Bauer-Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1-9*, pp. 76-118; and W. F. Albright, "The Goddess of Life and Wisdom," *AJSL*, XXXVI (1919-1920), 258-94.

ancient Near East were certainly the recipients of sagacious worship, and this was especially true with respect to Ma'at.[1] Furthermore Sirach's later reference to wisdom as one who dwells in "the assembly of the Most High," presumably as a goddess (chapter 24), and the description of wisdom as the "consort" of Yahweh in the Wisdom of Solomon (chapters 6-9) give further support to the mythological theory. Finally, W. F. Albright[2] has argued that these texts have been heavily influenced by non-extant Canaanite texts devoted to a Canaanite goddess of wisdom; an interesting theory, but unfortunately based upon meager evidence. Albright's contention is based upon references to El as "wise" in the Baal Cycle (ANET, p. 133), and upon a broken Aramaic text in Ahikar which seems to suggest that wisdom dwells as a goddess in heaven (vii, 95f., ANET, p. 428). While the mythological theory is most attractive, we cannot support it, and choose rather to regard this as a bit of demythologizing or perhaps as literary mythologizing in which mythological ideas and symbols are used, but are not to be taken literally. For example, Deuero-Isaiah does this in the connection of the Red Sea tradition with the creation myth (Isa. 51:9-11). Furthermore, the parallel texts in the Wisdom of Solomon could hardly be seen as an example of a goddess of wisdom in Israel, since the author is a rigid monotheist.

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[1] Cf. Chapters II and III.

[2] Albright, "Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom," and "The Goddess of Life and Wisdom." Note especially the indications by Albright of the influence of Canaanite upon the grammar, syntax, and mythology of chapters 8 and 9.

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The second theory concerning the depiction of wisdom in chapter 9 is that offered by Ringgren, among others, who suggests that this text is an example of an hypostatization of an attribute of Yahweh. In this process wisdom is then an attribute of Yahweh which begins to assume its own distinct personal existence, and as such, one might conceive of her eventually being considered as a functionary within the divine council of Yahweh, and even taking on divine existence as a goddess. Finally, a number of scholars[1] have championed the position that wisdom is being personified as a goddess in chapter 9, a position that gains added merit when it is conceded that wisdom is personified as a prophetess in 1:20-33. Furthermore, one finds many parallel examples of literary personification in the Bible: Jeremiah's and Hosea's personifications of Israel as the bride of Yahweh, and, even more similar to our passage, Ezekiel's rather graphic depiction of Jerusalem and Samaria as unfaithful lovers of Yahweh who became sacred prostitutes (Ezek. 23). In following this argument, wisdom would then be seen as a literary personification, and the language and symbols are those of the fertility goddesses. Thus wisdom is personified as a fertility goddess in order to present her as an enticing alternative to the "Strange Woman." We tend to accept the last theory, and thus regard wisdom personified as a fertility goddess, especially since Wisdom sends forth her maidens not to entice people to participate in fertility rites, but rather to be schooled in sapiential nourishment.

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[1] Among others, see Whybray, Wisdom in Proverbs.

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Thus we have here an example, not of a wisdom goddess initiating her cult within the confines, say, of a wisdom school, but rather the utilization of mythological language and symbols in order to give poetic expression to a sapiential concept: through devotion to and a seeking of wisdom, one finds life and the source of life, Yahweh.[1] Even as cultic religion was perceived by Israel's priests to serve as the sphere of mediation between the holy deity and profane man so that profane man could approach the realm of the holy and enjoy the resulting blessings, so the wise utilize cultic and mythological language to speak of wisdom as the mediator between a transcendent deity who ordered creation and the followers of wisdom. A similar process is at work in 1:22-33 where wisdom is personified as a prophetess embodying the revelatory word which confronts and redeems man from ignorance, non-being, and destruction, and leads him to Yahweh. Furthermore, this process of using mythological and cultic language to describe the concept of wisdom is an excellent example of von Rad's musing concerning what process is at work when the wise apparently use cultic language and ideas. The process in this case involves the effort by the literary, poetic wise to give poetic vividness and attractiveness to the concept of wisdom in order to emphasize ideas which existed within the structure of their own ideology.[2]

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[1] William McKane, Proverbs, pp. 364f.

[2] Gerhard von Rad, Wisdom in Israel, pp. 187-88.

The second strophe found in vv. 13-18 of chapter 9 is, we would argue, a similar process in which "folly" (כסילות) is personified as a fertility goddess, for she is found enthroned in her temple located on the acropolis of the city, and calls out to those who pass by to participate with her in a sacral meal involving fertility rites. In contrast to the life which Dame Wisdom offers her devotees, "Folly's" temple is presented as the gateway to the realm of the dead ruled by Mot and the Rephaim. The sapiential idea of folly is given poetic, mythological form by utilizing the imagery of a fertility goddess. Now it seems rather striking to notice that in these descriptions of personified wisdom, depicted as a fertility goddess, and of "folly" or her main devotee, the "Strange Woman," also depicted as fertility participants and goddesses, we have the sages utilizing the basic mythological characteristics of ancient Near Eastern fertility goddesses who were said to be goddesses of love and life, jealousy and death (war), and, at least as concerns Ishtar, wisdom. The sages have used these in depicting wisdom, folly, and the "Strange Woman." Yet only goddess wisdom truly leads to love and life, whereas folly and her devotees, the prostitute, the adulteress, the fertility devotee, and the fertility goddesses lead to death.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the "Strange Woman" is a rather motley figure who includes the adulteress, the prostitute, the fertility devotee, the fertility goddess, and finally the personification of folly as a fertility goddess. This fusion of

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different types seems most comparable to a similar blending together of the same types in the prophetic literature where they are again lumped together in an indistinguishable maze. What they share is obvious: sexual deviation from accepted socio-religious behavior, a deviation that appears to the Israelite sage to be the epitomy of folly[1] and the pathway to death. An avoidance of the "Strange Woman" made by the sages includes a rejection of any type of illicit sexual behavior, including participation within the structure of fertility religion. Thus we find that the Israelite sages rejected fertility religion. But the warning against cultic involvement in the fertility religions known to the Israelites is not based upon sacral law issuing forth from the Yahwistic polemic against the Canaanite and Mesopotamian fertility cults, but rather upon the sapiential ethos in which certain sexual relationships were completely rejected as being out of step with the righteous order of society expressed in social mores and customs. Finally, it seems most probable that such a warning against participation in illicit sexual relationships, including fertility rites,[2] would stem from the sapiential disdain of any activity in which passions were given free rein. Thus, for

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[1] This seems to be the best explanation of Koheleth's remark in 7:26 when, in seeking to know and to experience folly, he becomes associated with a woman who is described in similar terms to the "Strange Woman" (Ec. 7:23-29).

[2] Bauer-Kayatz observes concerning the sages in Proverbs 1-9: "Ihre vordringliche Aufgabe ist es, vor dem Verlassen des rechten Weges, vor dem Abirren in fremde Bindungen, die aus der Verbundenheit mit Jahwe herausführen, zu warnen. Nach unserer Sammlung besteht die Hauptgefahr in der Gemeinschaft mit den Gottlosen, die den Willen Jahwes verachten, in den Verlockungen und Versuchungen, in die sie

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example, ecstatic religious behavior would characterize the "heated man," but not the true sage, the "silent man."

Proverbs 10-31

Sacrifice[1] and Prayer.[2] In the second[3] and

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hineinführen. Speziell der Umgang mit der 'Fremden," die als Vertreterin des jahwefeindlichen kanaanäischen Kultus anzusprechen ist, muss ein aktuelles Problem gewesen sein. Das war von der frühen Königszeit an der Fall, begannen doch zu der Zeit durch die engeren politischen Beziehungen zu den Nachbarvölkern die fremden Kulte stärker ihren Einfluss auf Israel geltend zu machen. Vor allem in Jerusalem, dem Mittelpunkt des kultischen und kulturellen Lebens, als ehemaligem kanaanäischem Stadtstaat mit kanaanäischen Heiligtümern und Kulten müssen sich diese neuen Gefahren und Versuchungen ausgewirkt haben. Es ist deshalb leicht begreiflich, dass hier dringende erzieherische Aufgaben gesehen wurden " (Studien zu Proverbien 1-9, pp. 137-38).

[1] For detailed studies of sacrifice, one should consult Roland de Vaux, Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1964); N. H. Snaith, "Sacrifices in the Old Testament," VT, VII(1957), 308f.; and the extensive bibliography listed by H. H. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 111f.

[2] Unfortunately, prayer in ancient Israel has not received in-depth analyses by many scholars. General treatments to be consulted include: D. R. Ap-Thomas, "Notes on Some Terms Relating to Prayer," VT, VI (1956), 225-41; P. A. H. De Boer, De vorbeede in het Oud Testament, OTS, III (Leiden: E. J.Brill, 1943); N. B. Johnson, Prayer in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, SBL Monograph Series, III (Philadelphia: SBL, 1948); and E. Peterson, "Die geschichtliche Bedeutung der jüdischen Gebetsrichtung," ThZ, III (1947), 1-15.

[3] The second major collection encompasses 10:1-22:16, and has the superscription: "The Proverbs of Solomon." The larger collection has been redacted to include two minor collections, 10-15 and 16:1-22:16. As is the case with all of the collections, this one most probably was put together in a wisdom school and served the function of a textbook for teaching language skills, analytical and reflective thought, and sapiential ethics. Dating is a major problem, but certainly the references to the court would indicate that at least some of the material originated during the period of the monarchy, though aramaisms suggest that some of the material is post-exilic (cf. Fohrer, Introduction, p. 320). Scott's observation is prudently cautious: "Much, perhaps most, of the material...is traditional and pre-exilic in

fifth[1] major collections of the proverbial material of Proverbs, the wise refer to the cultic acts of sacrifice and prayer: 15:8 (sacrifice and prayer), 15:29 (Prayer), 17:1 (Sacrifice), 21:3 (sacrifice), 21:27 (sacrifice), and 28:9 (prayer). And though admittedly these references are few in number, they do provide us with additional insight in the attempt to analyze the views of the Israelite wise concerning cultic religion. The first mention of cultic ritual occurs in 15:8:

> The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord,
> But the prayer[2] of the upright obtains his favor.

The form of the saying is an antithetical, literary proverb[3] consisting of two stichoi, the most common form found in the first subdivision of the second collection (10-15). Gerhard von Rad has commented concerning this type of saying:

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origin. Some of it belongs to the ageless popular wisdom which Israel shared with surrounding peoples. The most that we can say with confidence about the date of Part II is that it was the fruit of a long process, and reached its present form probably in the fifth or fourth century B.C." (*Proverbs. Ecclesiastes*, p. 18).

[1] The fifth collection comprises chapters 25-29 and has as its title: "These also are the Proverbs of Solomon which the Men of Hezekiah, King of Judah, copied." The superscription provides us with evidence that the date for the redaction is during the reign of Hezekiah (715-687/6). This collection likewise has been redacted to include two minor units, 25-27 with agrarian concerns, and 28-29 with concerns of the court. (Cf. Udo Skladny, *Die ältesten Spruchsammlungen in Israel*. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1962], pp. 46f.).

[2] When the wise refer to prayer, they use the most general term, תפלה, which is defined succinctly as "intercession to God on behalf of oneself or others." (Cf. C. G. F. Smith, "Prayer," *IDB*, III [1964], 857-867).

[3] For a detailed analysis of the Israelite proverb, see Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, *Studien zur Israelitischen Spruchweisheit*, WMANT, XXVIII (Neukirchener Verlag, 1968). Hermisson considers sayings which

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> One can see that the contrasts are sharply opposed. But the endless possibility of variation in this literary form consists in the fact that these contrasts are not, in fact, precise opposites. What is said is not simply the opposite of what has gone before--that is, tautologically, with the elements completely reversed--that would be tedious. The antithesis has, in fact, a relative independence as a statement, while it turns the thought that has already been expressed, very freely into its opposite. In each case we have simply one possible opposite among many.[1]

Furthermore, such a saying, which is concerned with contrasting the cultic involvement of the wicked with that of the righteous, certainly is retrospective, giving evidence of serious theological reflection concerning cultic participation in general and concerning what is or what is not acceptable cultic worship to Yahweh.

In this proverb are we to conclude that the wise are contrasting two different cultic activities, i.e. sacrifice and prayer, and therefore are stating that sacrifice is rejected by Yahweh but prayer is accepted, or rather is the contrast emphasizing the radically different character of two opposing groups as they participate in cultic worship, and that it is the character of these individuals which makes a cultic activity acceptable or unacceptable to Yahweh?[2] In our opinion, the emphasis is not upon the contrast of two different cultic activities,

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contain the statement תועבת יהוה to belong to lehrhaften Sprüche which have the purpose of instructing and educating, and are not just observations based on everyday experiences (op. cit., pp. 64f.).

[1] Wisdom in Israel, p. 28. He notes that over 90 percent of the proverbs in 10-15 are antithetical.

[2] W. Stärk represents the first position when he says concerning the wise: "Sie individualisieren den Gottesdienst, so tritt das Gebet an die erste Stelle, und sie erheben das Sittengesetz über die Zeremonie " (Lyrik, SAT, III [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck Ruprecht, 1911], 213). We do not deny that there is abundant evidence for a 'spiritualizing' and individualizing process occurring with respect to

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sacrifice and prayer, but rather upon the character of the cultic participants.[1] Cultic participation by the wicked, those people whose behavior is immoral, disorderly, not in tune with the social dictates of the God of order, is cultically unacceptable, and instead of producing the desired results--the obtaining of the blessing of the deity--actually is rejected as 'abhorrent.' However, the cultic participation of the upright, those whose social and moral behavior is in accordance with the demands of Yahweh, is judged acceptable to Yahweh, and thus the blessings flowing through the channel of the cult may be obtained.[2] After all, the proverb does not read: "Sacrifice is an abomination to Yahweh, but prayer obtains his favor," but rather both nouns have qualifying genitives--"the sacrifice of the wicked" and "the prayer of the upright." That the antithesis is not contrasting sacrifice and prayer also may be deduced by the recognition that

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cultic symbols and rituals especially in post-exilic literature (e.g. Ps. 51). However, as von Rad cogently perceives, such a process was not intended to sever the spiritual individual from rituals and symbols, but rather was intended to preserve them by allowing reflective individuals to see in them the possibilities of spiritual and individual meaning, something which most probably was inherent in the original understanding (Old Testament Theology, I [New York: Harper and Row, 1962], 396f.).

[1] Prayer as well as sacrifice can be equally deceitful and involve the mere repetition of words in a liturgical form (cf. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, p. 256). Of course prayer was conceived of as possessing an inherent power, similar to the power of the prophetic word and the ritual blessing and cursing. However, this power is ultimately dependent upon the volition of the deity who judges the petition while considering the disposition of the petitioner (cf. A. S. Herbert, Worship in Ancient Israel. [Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959], p. 26).

[2] For a detailed analysis of the 'wicked' and the 'righteous' in Proverbs 10-15, see Schmid, Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit, pp. 156f.

sacrifice is considered to have been accompanied by liturgical prayer uttered by a priestly functionary who identifies the worshipper and describes the nature and purpose of the sacrifice (cf. II Chron. 29:27f.; Dt. 26:1f.). In fact, many of the psalms have been regarded as liturgical texts read during cultic services. This is especially true during the lament-thanksgiving cycle during which sacrifices are accompanied by psalms of lament and thanksgiving.[1] The implication of this is that the reference to sacrifice and prayer in this antithetical proverb is the result of the variation of language typical of such proverbs and of the effort common to the wise to include, as much as possible, the totality of a particular activity, in this case the cultic activity of sacrifice and prayer.[2]

Furthermore, an examination of the word for 'sacrifice' (זבח) deserves close attention. זבח can refer to 'sacrifice' in general, i.e. any type of sacrifice, though in early cultic traditions it can refer to a specific type of sacrifice, the 'communion' or 'peace' offering.[3] If the more specific nuance of the term is intended in the proverb, then we have a concern with the communion sacrifice which, as discussed earlier, has as its primary intent the establishing of a communion between cultic personnel, the worshipper and his invited guests, and the deity in the involvement in a cultic meal at a sanctuary. Such a cultic participation was considered to result in the 'well-being' of the participants, a state indicated by a synonym for this sacrifice, שלם. The observation of the wise would indicate then that such a communion and subsequent state of well-being is impossible for the 'wicked'. In addition, according to cultic tradition a communion sacrifice could not be offered by a sinner, since he had to offer a sacrifice of expiation which did not include any communion meal.[1] Only those who had not disturbed the sacral and moral orders of the cultic community were allowed to participate within the framework of a communion sacrifice and meal.[2] Such a proverb then would correspond to the understanding of the priestly creators of ritual and

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[1] This was argued most effectively by Sigmund Mowinckel (Psalmenstudien, I (Oslo. Reprinted by P. Schippers, Amsterdam, 1961). De Vaux states: "The hymn-book, or prayer book, of the second Temple is the Psalter " (Ancient Israel, II. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965, p. 457).

[2] A similar effort to speak of the totality of a practice, idea, relationship, etc., may be seen in another antithetical proverb found in 10:1--"A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother." Now obviously, the point is not that a wise son would please only the father and not the mother, nor that a foolish son would not be a sorrow to his father, but rather the father and mother are mentioned in order to express the totality of the parental relationship.

[3] Helmer Ringgren, Israelite Religion (Philadelphia: Fortress

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Press, 1966), pp. 166f.

[1] I am referring to the אשם and the חטאה sacrifices. Cf. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, II, p. 453.

[2] Kraus affirms this point by stating: "The idea and expectation that the meal eaten together will create communio is basic to this sacrifice." He further observes that such a sacrifice and meal often take place within a covenant festival (Worship in Israel, p. 118). It is not surprising that the sacrifice that is of greatest concern to the wise is the communion sacrifice, since the cultic understanding of such a sacrifice corresponds quite well to the concerns of the wise with respect to 'order' and well-being. It should also be stressed that one of the varieties of the communion offering was a תודה, 'thanksgiving offering'. Now it will become more apparent as we proceed that the wise were involved in the writing of two types of psalms, or prayers, and these are the lament and thanksgiving. We shall suggest that when the wise refer to the communion sacrifice and to prayer they specifically have in mind their own participation in

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sacral law.

That the wise were well aware of priestly sacral law also seems apparent in the usage of priestly terms which designated whether or not a cultic activity was acceptable to Yahweh. תועבה is found in cultic traditions to describe social and cultic practices which were considered morally repugnant or cultically abhorrent to Yahweh,[1] while רצון is a designation made by a priest who after examining a cultic offering or activity declares it is acceptable.[2] Now statements to the effect that the priests were concerned with proper ritual, whereas the wise were concerned with the moral and social character of the worshippers may be rejected out of hand when one sees in certain "Entrance Liturgies" (Pss. 15, 24) and in the Holiness Code (especially chapter 19) that members of the sacral community had to exhibit moral character. In the "Entrance Liturgies" only those seeking to participate within the sphere of cult were allowed entrance to the holy who could deny any complicity in moral wrongdoing. Certainly the emphasis of the wise in this proverb is upon the character of the cultic participants, not in whether a sacrifice met the proper ritual requirements.

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the creation of cultic literature, especially the sapiential laments and thankgivings.

[1] Dt. 14:3, 17:4; Lev. 18:26, 27, 29, etc. Scott concludes: "The term seems to have meant originally what was ritually forbidden." (*Proverbs. Ecclesiastes*, p. 60).

[2] Lev. 1:3; 19:5; 22:19, 20, 29; 23:11, etc. It is possible, however, that the Israelite wise have taken these expressions from ancient Near Eastern wisdom language. In the "Shamash Hymn " (ll. 100, 106 and 119) the basis for doing righteous acts is that such acts are "pleasing to Shamash, and he will prolong his life" (*ṭa-a-bi eli ^{d}šamaš balāta (ti.la) ut-tar*). Also see the "Counsels of Wisdom,"

That was for the priests to decide, but it is obvious that the priests were just as concerned with the moral integrity of the worshippers.[1]

The second reference to cultic activity is found in 15:29--

> The Lord is far from the wicked,
> But he hears the prayer of the righteous.

The form of this saying is also an antithetical, literary proverb consisting of two stichoi in which the emphasis is placed upon who may have access to the realm of the holy, and, therefore, may benefit from the fortune-working sphere of cultic blessing. While the cultic terms for 'approaching' Yahweh (קרב, נגש) are not present in the saying, the occurrence of their opposite, רחוק, should be noted. In Ex. 24:1-2(J), only Moses is allowed "to draw near" (נגש) to God on the Mount, whereas Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders had to stand from afar (מרחק). Similarly in Ex. 20:18f. (JE), the congregation at Mt. Sinai stood from afar (מרחק), whereas only Moses 'drew near' (נגש). Therefore, in this proverb the point is made that only the righteous enjoy access to Yahweh, whereas the wicked do not. Such an access is concretely described in terms of the cultic act of prayer which Yahweh 'will hear,' a term usually implying 'with favor' (Num. 20:16; Dt. 33:7; I Kgs. 8:45).

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1. 64. Throughout Amen-em-Opet wicked and foolish actions are not to be done, because they are "the abomination of the god " (xiii:15, xv:20, etc.).

[1] We concur with A. Drubbel who says concerning the proverb: "C'est affirmer nettement que la valeur des sacrifices est en strict rapport avec les dispositions du sacrificateur." ("Le conflit entre la sagesse profane et la sagesse religieuse," Biblica, XVII [1936], 414).

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The prayer of the righteous is an important motif in many Old Testament traditions, and involves the idea of being able to approach the deity with a petition that will be granted a favorable response. Abraham's intercession for Sodom (Gen. 18:22f.) and for Abimelech (Gen. 20), Job's intercession for his opponents (42:7f.), and the petition of a righteous lamenter (Pss. 7, 17, etc.) are examples of the importance placed upon the prayer of the righteous. That the wise shared this concept is evident in this literary saying.

In 17:1 we have a 'Better' saying[1] which speaks of cult:

> Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a temple[2] filled with sacrificial feasting and contention.

In a 'Better' saying, two points are compared with a decision being made by the wise that one is preferable to the other. In such a comparison the judgment is made even more striking by the fact that what is judged preferable is often rather meager and undesirable in and of itself ('a dry morsel,' a 'little'- Prov. 16:8, 'reproach'- Prov. 27:5), whereas that which is judged less preferable is in and of itself bountiful, pleasurable, desirable ("a temple filled with sacrificial feasting," "large income"- Prov. 16:8, "love"- Prov. 27:5). Yet what makes that which is undesirable or meager more preferable than that which by itself would seem desirable or bountiful is due to

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[1] For an analysis of the 'Better' saying, see J. L. Crenshaw, "Wisdom," pp. 238-39. Crenshaw remarks that the purpose of the saying is "to single out certain kinds of character or conduct as superior to others."

[2] The temple is referred to as בית זבח in II Chron. 7:12.

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the practice by the wise of appending qualifying adjectives and phrases which in the limits of a particular context or condition make that which seems unattractive actually more attractive than that which would seem attractive. Thus the point is not that a 'dry morsel' is more desirable than a sacrificial feast, but rather quiet solitude in one's repast is far preferable to sumptuous cultic dining taking place in an atmosphere of strife. The saying should not be taken as a lambast of the wise against cultic activities occurring in the temple, but rather as an emphasis upon the supreme desirability of tranquility, even with certain limitations, to strife, even in the best possible surroundings. Again, it should be noted that the purpose of a communion sacrifice followed by a communion meal was to achieve communion between the participants and the deity and to establish harmony and well-being, so that strife in such a context is the opposite of what was intended in the ritual.[1] Such a text shows that the wise were quite aware of cultic theology and were in accord with it.

A second 'Better' saying that involves a reference to cult is 21:3--

> The establishing of righteousness and justice is more acceptable[2] to the Lord than sacrifice.

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[1] Cf. Amen-em-Opet, ix, 5f.; זבחי ריב may be intended to contrast with זבחי צדק, "correct" or "orderly" sacrifices mentioned in Deut. 33:19; Pss. 4:6, 51:21. One should also notice the parallel to זבח ריב found in UT 51:III:17ff. which, in a numerical saying, lists three sacrifices which Baal hates, and one is called a dbh dnt, 'a sacrifice of contention.' The best and most detailed description of a communion meal occurs in I Sam. 2:13f.

[2] נבחר...מן is substituted in this saying for the more common טוב...מן.

It is, of course, possible to regard this saying as a polemic against the cultic practice of sacrifice, and, therefore, as evidence of a tension existing between the wise and the practitioners of cultic ritual. However, some of the edge is taken off this argument when one realizes that it is conceivable that the clause, "the establishing of righteousness and justice," may have been taken from a priestly torah in which only those who "establish righteousness and justice" and are judged צדיק may enter into the sacred place to participate in cult. Ezekiel utilizes such a priestly torah which contains in the introduction the statement: ואיש כי־יהיה צדיק ועשה משפט וצדקה. Then follows a list of cultic, moral, and social sins which one must not be guilty of committing in order to be judged צדיק, that is, one who "establishes righteousness and justice."[1] Only after a denial of such sins and a receiving from the priest a declaration of being a צדיק may one enter into the cultic realm in order to participate in cultic activities. Yet this is not to deny that in a scale of values the wise were more praiseworthy of the establishing and maintaining of cosmic and societal order by means of 'orderly' behavior than of sacrifice. But it is not inconceivable that the priests were of the same opinion. In fact one who was judged רשע was not allowed to participate in cult, and, if found guilty of certain 'unforgiveable crimes,' deliberate crimes which could not be removed by ritual atonement, he was removed from the sacral community and even put to death (see Lev. 20).[1] One should also recognize that a 'Better' saying does not necessarily judge what is less valued as intrinsically bad, but that with which it is compared is of more value.[2]

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[1] Cf. Walther Eichrodt, Ezekiel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), p. 238. It should be admitted that עשה משפט וצדקה also occurs in prophetic oracles concerning kingship (Jer. 21:12, 22:3, 15). Such has led some to argue for a prophetic influence on the proverb. While this is certainly possible, notation of Meri-ka-Re, 11. 128f., should be made: "More acceptable is the character of one upright of heart than the ox of the evildoer."

Finally, the term for 'sacrifice' once again is זבח, and if it is given the more specific meaning of 'communion sacrifice,' then we have additional evidence that the wise were well aware that those not judged to be צדיק by the priest could not participate in such a communion ritual.

The final proverb in the second collection which refers to sacrifice is 21:27--

> The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination,
> How much more so[3] when he brings it with an evil design.

This saying is a comparative, literary proverb which utilizes according to von Rad the argument a maiore ad minus ("if here, then how

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[1] צדק is a frequent word in cultic contexts. The cultic community was referred to as the צדיקים (Pss. 33:1, 142:8, and especially the "Entrance Liturgies," 15:2, 24:5). The doors of the temple are referred to as the שערי צדק (Ps. 118:19), and one who entered was referred to as a צדיק (Ps. 118:20). Even the priests were to be clothed in צדק (Ps. 132:9).

[2] We strongly disagree with Schmid's contention that the 'Better Saying' should not be translated "better....than..., but rather should be understood in the exclusive sense "good is...and not..." (Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit, p. 159, footnote 69). One would hardly argue that "to dwell in the corner of a housetop" or that "a dry morsel with quiet" are "good." Rather these can be judged to be only "better" than that which is relatively worse.

[3] אף כי is an emphatic adverbial phrase (Roland Williams, Hebrew Syntax, no. 385).

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much more there"),[1] an argument in which the observation made in the first stichos takes on added import when the condition or circumstance pointed to in the second stichos is appended. In this proverb the wise once more are familiar with the cultic pronouncement of "abomination" with respect to the sacrifice of the wicked, but add that it is even more abhorrent when brought with an evil design, i.e. to obtain the aid of the deity in a [illegible] to be foolish enough to try to receive the [illegible] in wickedness.

It is interesting to [illegible] 'evil design,' זמה, is found in [illegible] most cases, sexual sins which are [illegible] (תועבות) to Yahweh.[2] Since both תועבה and [illegible] proverb, it is conceivable that the wise are again utilizing cultic language and the specific cultic meaning which that language conveys, and, as a result, are in agreement once more with their priestly colleagues.[3]

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[1] Wisdom in Israel, p. 122.

[2] See Lev. 18:17, 20:14 (incest), Ezekiel 16 (idolatry described in terms of prostitution, adultery, and fertility rites), and Ezekiel 22:9, 23:21, 27, 29, 35, 44, 48, 49 (Sexual sins including incest, adultery, and fornication). Such sins had no means of atonement and forgiveness according to priestly traditions (cf. Lev. 18:29).

[3] This argument is all the more forceful when it is noticed that a person who partakes of a communion sacrificial meal when he is in a state of sinfulness, that is, he has not had his sin atoned for, is "to be cut off from the people," that is, to be put to death. For a discussion of the unforgiveable sin, see Victor Maag, "Unsühnbare Schuld," Kairos, VIII (1966), 95f. Harrelson's point with respect to the cultic understanding of sacrifices is most cogent: "Neither ancient Israel nor the neighboring proples thought of sacrifices accomplishing their ends automatically. Sacrifices had to be made in

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It is interesting to observe that the word translated 'evil design,' זמה, is found in cultic traditions to refer to, in most cases, sexual sins which are judged to be "abominations" (תועבות) to Yahweh.[2] Since both תועבה and זמה are used in this proverb, it is conceivable that the wise are again utilizing cultic language and the specific cultic meaning which that language conveys, and, as a result, are in agreement once more with their priestly colleagues.[3]

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The only reference to prayer in the fifth collection occurs in 28:9--

> He who turns his ear from the hearing of instruction,
> Even his prayer is an abomination.

This saying is the most simple of the sayings and does not exhibit any obvious parallelism, though it is quite similar to certain participial laws in the legal codes.[1] The term tôrâh could be regarded as either sapiential instruction or priestly law. If the latter is the case, then the wise have again agreed with their priestly colleagues that worship, in this case prayer, is judged to be abhorrent to Yahweh if the worshipper is not 'obedient' to the priestly instruction. If the sapiential instruction is intended, then the wise would indicate that there is a close relationship between obedience to wisdom instruction and cultic prayer. The image of 'not hearing' is a common one in sapiential literature. Ptah-hotep argued:

> To hear is of advantage for a son who hearkens. If hearing enters into a hearkener, the hearkener becomes a hearer. (When) hearing is good, speaking is good. Every hearkener (is) an advantage, and hearing is better than anything that is, (and thus) comes the goodly love (of a man). How good it is when a son accepts what his father says! Thereby maturity comes to him. He whom god loves is a hearkener, (but) he whom god hates cannot hear. It is the heart which

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the right way. The intention of the heart was important. And the gods either received or refused to receive the offerings, as they saw fit." (From Fertility Cult to Worship [Garden City: Doubleday, 1970], p. 46).

[1] Such a close parallel in language between the forms and vocabulary of the wise and apodictic law has been exhaustively examined by Erhard Gerstenberger, Wesen und Herkunft des 'Apodiktischen Rechts,' WMANT, XX (Neukirchener Verlag, 1965).

> brings up its lord as one who hears or as one who does not hear. The life, prosperity, and health of a man is his heart...[1]

In Egyptian wisdom texts the heart was considered to be that organ which received the sapiential instruction and then initiated wise actions. A fool was dubbed as a man who was "without heart." The Israelite wise appeared to have borrowed this idea, as Solomon, for example, in I Kgs. 3 prayed for a 'hearing heart' in order to receive the divine wisdom that would enable him to rule as a just king and judge.[2] The point in the proverb is that one who does not obey sapiential instruction, and is devoid of a 'hearing heart', is incapable of acting wisely, and, therefore, is in no position to petition or make requests from Yahweh in the form of prayer, for only a wise and righteous individual is able to do so.

The Vow. The second and seventh collections each contain a reference to the cultic vow: 20:25 and 31:2. 20:25 may be translated:

> It is a snare for a man to declare impetuously: "It is sacred,"
> And to reflect only after making his vows.

The form of the saying is a synthetic, literary proverb in which the second stichos extends the thought of the first. The proverb makes the judgment that before one obligates himself to a vow, he should engage in a careful, judicious process of examination to determine

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[1] ANET, p. 414; 11.534f.

[2] H. Brunner, "Das hörende Herz," ThLZ, LXXIX (1954), 697-700.

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whether or not he is capable of fulfilling his obligation to the deity.[1] A vow usually involves a bargain with the deity in that, if the deity grants one's petition, then the petitioner will fulfill a particular vow that he has made.[2] In the course of making a vow, one announces that the promised activity, commitment, or possession is 'holy' (קדש), i.e. it is to be set apart for divine service or usage if the deity grants his petition. In declaring something 'to be holy' it is then transferred from the sphere of the profane to the sacral realm. A good example of a vow is that of Absalom who vows to sacrifice to God at Hebron, if he is returned to the good graces of David (II Sam. 15:7f.). The most common situation for the vow within the sphere of the cult was during the lament in which the one lamenting vowed to do something for God, most often to return to the sanctuary in order to offer up a thanksgiving sacrifice accompanied by a thanksgiving psalm, if God would deliver him from his distress (cf. Pss. 56:12-13 and 66:13-15). The best known example of a hasty and rather foolish vow was the one made by Jepthah in Jg. 11:30-39 who vowed to sacrifice

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[1] Other wise men were equally concerned with avoiding hasty vows and oaths. In the "Counsels of Wisdom" students are counseled:

> Beware of careless talk, guard your lips;
> Do not utter solemn oaths while alone,
> For what you say in a moment will follow you afterwards.
> But exert yourself to restrain your speech (BWL, p. 105, ll. 131-34).

Also see Koh. 5:4-6.

[2] Th. C. Vriezen, The Religion of Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967, p. 95).

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as a burnt offering the first one to meet him from his house as he returned from the hoped for military victory over the Ammonites, and, of course, to his dismay, this 'one' turned out to be his own daughter.[1] Such an incident also shows the extreme seriousness of the obligation that one has to fulfill a vow, for failure to do so met with destruction from the deity.[2]

It should be stressed that the wise in this proverb are not counseling their adherents to refrain from making vows, but rather are stressing that, before any vow is made, considerations of the seriousness of the vow and especially of the matter of being able to carry out the pledge should be made. Again we find the wise in harmony with priestly traditions concerning the vow:

> When a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word: he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth. (Num. 30:2).
>
> When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not be slack to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin in you. But if you refrain from vowing, it shall be no sin in you. You shall be careful to perform what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily

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[1] For an excellent discussion of the vow, see Yehezkel Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 319.

[2] A possible meaning of the word לבקר, translated "to reflect," is "to divine" by means of consultation of the entrails of sacrificial animals (cf. II Kgs. 16:15) or by consultation of the oracle (Ps. 27:4). Such a meaning is also found in the Ugaritic bqr (see Virolleaud, "Les nouvelles tablettes de Ras Shamra," Syria, XXVIII [1951], 25-27). If this meaning were intended by the wise, then the point would be that it is foolish to make a vow and then to consult the oracle only to discover that one's request was against the will of the deity.

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> vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth (Dt. 23:21-23).[1]

The second reference to the vow occurs in 31:2--

> What my son? What son of my womb?
> What, son of my vows?

The reference to "son of my vows" reflects the common cultic practice of a woman who, devoid of male offspring, makes a vow committing her to a particular obligation if the deity grants her a son. The best example is that of Hannah who "devotes" Samuel to cultic service in Shiloh in fulfillment of her vow (I Sam. 1:1f.).

The Sacred Lots.[2] The priestly consultation of the oracle by means of the casting of sacred lots referred to as *Urim* and *Thummim* is mentioned in the second collection in 16:33:

> From the breastplate the lot is cast,
> But the decision is from the Lord.

Again we have an antithetical, literary proverb emphasizing a theological reflection of the wise concerning a cultic activity. The sacred lots were the possession of the chief priest who apparently kept them in the breastplate (חשן) attached to the *ephod*, a priestly garment (I Sam. 2:18, 28). When a decision from Yahweh was desired, the priest would cast forth the lots and the answer to a yes or no question would be made. Such a mechanical means of obtaining an oracle of Yahweh was in practice until after the time of David when it seems to have been replaced by the prophets. The next reference to the sacred lots occurs during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah when again they appear in the possession of the priests, perhaps coinciding with the "death " of prophecy in the Post-Exilic period.[1]

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[1] Also see Lev. 27.

[2] See J. Lindblom, "Lot-casting in the Old Testament," *VT*, XII (1962), 164f. This element of divination points to the Israelite participation, at least in a limited way, in the arts of the diviner. Glendon Bryce has recently attempted to argue for the existence of omen proverbs in Israel, though he neglects to deal with the attack against forms of divination, except lot-casting, made by Sirach in 31:1-8. ("Omen-Wisdom in Ancient Israel").

Once more we find the wise functioning as critics of the popular misunderstanding of cultic activities by emphasizing that the lots have no magical power in and of themselves, but rather it is Yahweh who acts in giving the decision (משפט), a view most probably shared by the priests themselves.[2]

Cultic Language in Proverbs. We have mentioned already in other contexts the noticeable usage of cultic language by the wise,

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[1] Ezra 2:62 and Neh. 7:65. The best description of the ritual is found in I Sam. 14. The word קסם may be a reference to a decision reached by the casting of lots in Prov. 16:10, since the same word refers to the casting of arrows of divination by the king of Babylon in Ezekiel 21:21.

[2] Cf. Ex. 28:20, especially the statement that Aaron would carry the lots in his breastplate when he appeared before Yahweh. The usage of lots by the priests to obtain oracles is an involvement in omenology by which various signs were indicative of specific, future events. Such an enterprise was bound up with the idea of the laws of order. Therefore, the casting of lots resulted in a preindication of the impending results of that order. Yet, the wise argue that this type of omenology has meaning only in that it is tied up with the will of Yahweh who has the freedom to decide independently of any determined causal nexus (see Gese, Lehre und Wirklichkeit, p. 48).

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and it appears in the previous cases that cultic language by the wise at times coincides with cultic meaning associated with that language, but not always. Without pretending to be comprehensive in considering this problem, one more example of the possible usage of cultic language by the wise needs to be examined. The case in point is 16:6:

> Iniquity (עון) by means of steadfast love and faithfulness
> is atoned for (יכפר),
> And in the fear of the Lord there is a turning away from evil.

The first stichos of this synthetic, literary proverb has been regarded by a number of scholars as a polemic against the cultic idea that sin is atoned for only by means of cultic sacrifice, whereas the wise using cultic language, "atonement" (כפר), have argued that it is the steadfast love (חסד) and faithfulness (אמת) of an individual that expiates sin.[1] However, we prefer to regard the wise once more as critics of a popular misunderstanding of cultic ritual that would involve the magical conception of sacrifice, that is, that there is some magical power within the ritual itself that automatically expiates the sins of the worshipper.[2] They do this by stressing an idea certainly current in non-wisdom traditions that it is the 'steadfast love' and 'faithfulness' not only of the worshipper but also of Yahweh which cause him to act to remove the guilt of sin (cf. Ex. 32:30, and esp. 34:7f.). Von Rad cogently observes that according to cultic tradition expiation by sacrifice is 'a saving event,' meaning that Yahweh acts to remove the guilt of the worshipper offering the sacrifice.[1] He acts to remove sin because of his "steadfast love" for his people and "faithfulness" to his promise to forgive sins which commit him to act, and not because of any magical power unleased in the sacrifice that would force him to do so.

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[1] E.g., McKane, Proverbs, p. 498.

[2] For an examination of popular religion, see J. L. Crenshaw, Prophetic Conflict, BZAW, CXXIV (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971), 24-35.

Job (The Narrative)

Introduction. That the Joban Narrative was originally an independent didactic narrative which had its own rather protracted as well as complex development separate and apart from the poetic Job is a position which has been accepted by the large majority of modern students of Job.[2] However, exactly how that development may be traced out by means of traditio-historical research does not receive such unanimity.[3] It does appear that the legend had its origin in a non-

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[1] Theology of the Old Testament, I, 21-71.

[2] Georg Fohrer, "Überlieferung und Wandlung der Hioblegende," Studien zum Buche Hiob (Gütersloher Verlagshaus: Gerd Mohn, 1963), pp. 44-67; "Zur Vorgeschichte und Komposition des Buches Hiob," Ibid, 26-43; A. Alt, "Zur Vorgeschichte des Buches Hiob," ZAW, LV (1937), 265-68; and Johannes Lindblom, La composition du livre de Job (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerups Förlag, 1945), p. 6. Such is indicated not only in terms of differences in language and theology, but also by Ezekiel's reference to Job along with Noah and Daniel which indicates that Job was quite well known during the early 6th century B. C. (14:14f.).

[3] Fohrer's traditio-historical investigation of the narrative is the most extensive (see "Überlieferung und Wandlung der Hioblegende" and "Zur Vorgeschichte und Komposition des Buches Hiob."). He points to four stages in the development of the legend before it was used by the Joban poet: Stage One--a pre-Israelite, probably Canaanite original; Stage Two--the early pre-exilic Israelite adaptation of the legend; Stage Three--the inclusion of certain early exilic vocabulary; and Stage Four--the inclusion of the Satan material, the influence of the priestly narrative, and the wisdom redaction during the post-exilic period. While Fohrer's analysis is suggestive, the refinement of the

Israelite wisdom setting, probably in Canaan,[1] if Sarna's analysis proves correct,[2] and eventually made its way into Israelite sapiential traditions during the pre-exilic period where it received its final redaction in the early post-exilic period before being inserted by the Joban poet into his own work.[3] The narrative was used by the poet to provide a framework for his own writing and as a popular drawing card, though it is doubtful that the story was intended to furnish any theological contribution to the poet's own very different creation.

The sapiential character of the legend may be seen in regard to wisdom terminology: Job's description as one who was "blameless (תם) and upright (ישר)" (1:1; cf. Prov. 2:21, 28:10, 29:10); as one who "feared God and turned away from evil" (1:1; cf. Prov. 3:7, 14:16, 16:6); and the description of Job's wife as one of the "foolish

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narrative into four distinct stages seems to be based on inadequate evidence, and, therefore, we would see only two broad stages, both of which occur in wisdom circles: a Canaanite sapiential stage and an Israelite wisdom stage.

[1] The rarity of wisdom literature in the Ugaritic discoveries is most perplexing, though some such literature has been found, including a Joban parallel in Akkadian (R. S. 25.460). See Jean Nougayrol, Emmanuel Laroche, Charles Virolleaud, C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica V*, Mission de Ras Shamra, XVI (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1968), 266f.

[2] "Epic Substratum in the Prose of Job," *JBL*, LXXVI(1957), 13-25.

[3] That the final redaction before its incorporation into the dialogues did not occur until the early post-exilic period is indicated by the references to "the satan" in the council of Yahweh and by the influence of the priestly narrative style noticeable in 42:16-17 ("full of days," cf. Gen. 25:8, 35:29; "and Job lived after this 140 years," cf. Gen. 5). See Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, KAT, XVI (Gütersloher Verlaghaus: Gerd Mohn, 1963), 31.

women" (2:10; cf. Prov. 9:13); in terms of sapiential forms: the casting of the tale into the form of a didactic narrative (cf. Mesopotamia: "The Legend of Ahikar," "Tale of the Poor Man of Nippur," "The Three Ox-Drivers from Adab;" Egypt: "Lament of the Eloquent Peasant," "The Prophecy of Nefer-rohu," "Sinuhe," and "The Tale of Two Brothers;" and Israel: possibly the "Joseph Story");[1] elements from the Streitgespräch including the missing disputation between Job and the three friends and the judgment of Yahweh (cf. Akkadian fables);[2] the proverb in 1:21 (cf. Koh. 5:14); and finally in terms of wisdom themes: theodicy, Job's refusal to speak rashly (cf. Prov. 19:11), the idea that God knows the 'hearts' of men (cf. Prov. 15:11), retribution, and the emphasis upon the prayer of a righteous man (cf. Prov. 15:8).

If we are correct in regarding the narrative as sapiential in origin and character, then the references to Job's cultic devotion will provide us with additional insights into the views of the wise concerning cultic religion.

Cultic Devotion. In the 'Prologue,' Job is characterized as a pious and upright, semi-nomadic patriarch whose piety is exemplified by his scrupulous devotion to cult. The key section with regard to his cultic devotion includes 1:4-5--

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[1] Considerable work needs to be done in the definition and analysis of sapiential narratives, which is no easy task as J. L. Crenshaw has demonstrated ("Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon 'Historical' Literature," JBL, LXXVIII [1969], 129-42).

[2] E.g., see the "Dispute between the Tamarisk and the Date Palm," ANET, pp. 592-93.

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> And his sons would come and celebrate a feast, in each one's house on his assigned day, and they would send and invite their sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it would happen when the days of the feast were ended that Job would send for his sons and sanctify them. Then he would rise up early in the morning and offer up a burnt offering for each of them, because he said; "Perhaps my sons have sinned and have cursed God in their heart." Thus Job would do continually.

Since some effort is made to depict Job as a semi-nomadic patriarch, it is important to note that Job, like the patriarchal leaders of families and clans, is given the responsibility for serving as the chief cultic functionary, that there is no reference to any priesthood or centralized cultic site, and that the participants are the members of the family.[1]

With regard to the 'feast' celebrated by Job's children, a number of scholars have suggested that the 'feast' is actually a cultic festival, since it lasts for a period of seven days and is consummated by Job's consecration of his sons and the subsequent burnt offerings.[2] In addition, the occurrence of the verb נקף may indicate that it is a cultic celebration, since the verb is found in other cultic contexts to mean "when the cycle of the cultic festivals comes round" (cf. Isa. 29:1 and the related noun תקופה in I Sam. 1:20 pointing to a cultic festival occurring at "the end of the year").

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[1] For a discussion of patriarchal religion, see Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, pp. 1-36; and Alt's classic study, "Der Gott der Väter," Kleine Schriften, I (Münich: Beck'sche Verlage, 1953), 1-78.

[2] See, e.g., N. H. Tur-Sinai, The Book of Job, rev. ed. (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1967), pp. 7f.

Furthermore, the statement "to celebrate a feast" (עשה משתה) does have the meaning in two other texts "to celebrate a cultic festival" (I Kgs. 3:15, Isa. 25:6). However, efforts to be more specific, and to suggest possible specific cultic festivals are more tenuous. The closest Israelite festival is that of Tabernacles, a Canaanite agrarian festival borrowed by the Israelites after settlement in Canaan. This festival occurred at the end of the year according to one tradition (Ex. 34:22), lasted seven days, and celebrated the harvest of the produce of the threshing floor and especially of grapes and olives.[1] Its joyful character was enhanced by the drinking of wine and dancing.[2] P added an eighth day which followed the conclusion of the festival when the people were to gather together in a "solemn assembly" (מקרא קדש) to worship and participate in the sacrifice of a "fire-offering" (אשה, a synonym in P for עלה).[3] The עלה was also given an expiatory value by P (Lev. 1:4).

However, attempts to be too specific as concerns a particular Israelite festival are out of character with the effort of the narrative to present Job as a semi-nomadic patriarch, and, therefore, a participant in a primitive cult. The most that can be said is that it is possible that a festival like Tabernacles influenced parts of the decription of the cultic ritual.

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[1] For a discussion of this festival, see de Vaux, Ancient Israel, II, 495-502.

[2] Such may be seen in this feast in Job where three sisters are invited to join with their brothers in eating and drinking. The invitation to the three sisters is paralleled, not only in the Festival of Tabernacles mentioned in Jg. 21:19f. where fertility rites are suggested, but also in Ugaritic cultic festivals which lasted seven days: 2 Aqht II, 26-40; UH 125, 39f. This may be one example of material remaining from the Canaanite form of the narrative.

[3] See Num. 29:12-34.

On the other hand, there is equally good evidence that the feast has no religious import whatsoever,[1] as can be argued upon the typical meaning of עשה משתה, "to celebrate a feast" (non-cultic). Examples of non-cultic feasts where we find the statement include: marriage (Jg. 14:12, 17), hospitality for guests (Gen. 19:3), weaning of a child (Gen. 21:8), a birthday (Gen. 40:20), a parity covenant (Gen. 26:30), cessation of hostilities (II Sam. 3:20-21), sheep-shearing (II Sam. 13:23), and a royal banquet (Est. 1:2f.). Furthermore, the seven day period is also a time period for certain non-cultic feasts (e.g., marriage, Jg. 14:12f.). Besides, the emphasis is not directly connected to the seven day period of the feast, but rather is on the number of Job's sons, and the fact that the feast lasted seven days may simply be incidental to the fact that this is the number of Job's sons. It also seems strange that Job's sanctification of the sons would take place only after the feast had been concluded, if the feast were considered to be a cultic festival. Finally, the feasting of the sons in each one's house seems to be introduced into the narrative in order to provide the background for the calamitous death of Job's children in one house, and Job's absence from the feast would seem strange if the feast had cultic overtones, since he was supposedly the leader of the cult. Therefore, the evidence for the feast being a cultic festival is quite inconclusive.

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[1] Fohrer, Das Buch Hiob, p. 77.

More central to the legend is the emphasis upon Job's cultic piety. Following the feast, Job sends for his sons to come so that he might "consecrate" (קדש)[1] them in preparation for the cultic sacrifice (cf. I Sam. 16:5).[2] Following this, Job then rises up early in the morning and sacrifices a burnt offering (עלה) for each of his seven sons.[3] The עלה was a sacrifice assumed to be borrowed from Canaan, and had the primary meaning of the offering of a 'gift' to the deity, though it also was attributed atoning powers as well,[4] especially by means of appeasing the deity's wrath, and would thus correspond to Job's concern to remove the possible sin committed by the sons of cursing God in one's heart. In cultic traditions earlier

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[1] For a discussion of the rites and meaning of consecration in the Old Testament, see de Vaux, Ancient Israel, II, 406f.

[2] Also see Ex. 19:10f.

[3] For an excellent discussion of the עלה, see Kraus, Worship in Israel, pp. 115f. The 'burnt offering' was common in Ugarit, and an important point is that it was at times accompanied by a lament. In the Aqht legend, one finds:

qrym. af. dbh. lilm
š'ly. dgṯ ( ) bšmym (1 Aqht, 191-192).

For additional references to 'ly as a 'burnt offering,' see Aistleitner, Wörterbuch der Ugaritischen Sprache, no. 2030.

[4] The atonement powers of the עולה may be seen in Jg. 21:4; I Sam. 13:9; and Mic. 6:6 (see von Rad, Theology of the Old Testament, I, 255-56).

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than P, the עלה was a morning sacrifice (II Kgs. 16:15; Ezek. 46:13), and thus parallels the time of Job's offering. In addition, such a sacrifice is mentioned in the narrative to correspond to the patriarchal עלות in the Yahwist (Gen. 8:20, 22:2f.; and Num. 23:1f.).

The second important section in the folk-tale which mentions cultic activities is in the "Epilogue," 42:8-10. After Yahweh has judged Job's remarks to be correct and the statements of the friends to be incorrect, he commands Eliphaz:

> And now, take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering on your own behalf, and my servant Job will make intercession for you, for surely I will accept his prayer not to punish you for your folly, because you did not speak correctly concerning me as did my servant Job. And Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went forth and did according to what Yahweh had commanded them, and Yahweh accepted Job's prayer. Now Yahweh restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed on behalf of his friends, and Yahweh gave to Job all that he had formerly possessed twice over.

Two points are of considerable interest to us in this passage: the burnt offering consisting of seven bulls and seven rams, and the intercessory prayer made by Job. Once again the sacrifice is a "burnt offering" which is intended in this context to appease Yahweh's wrath so that he will not punish the friends for speaking incorrectly about him.[1] Yet even more significant is the fact that the sacrifice made by the friends, again underlining the patriarchal character of the setting, is accompanied by Job's petition, and corresponds exactly

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[1] The number of animals sacrificed, seven bulls and seven rams, is extremely large, and probably demonstrates the severity of the 'sin' and the extreme wrath of Yahweh. The offering may also be influenced by the offering for the entire community made during the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles in the cultic

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to the cultic practice of offering עלות accompanied by petitions (e.g., Jer. 14:12; I Kgs. 3:4f.). This also reflects a common Old Testament idea that the "intercession" of a just and righteous person has tremendous power and influence (Moses: Ex. 32:11; Num. 11:2, 12:13; Abraham: Gen. 18:22f., 20:7f.; and Job, Noah, and Daniel in Ezek. 14:12-23).[1] In addition, Job's intercessory prayer is given further theological importance in the narrative by assigning to it the basis upon which Job's restoration by Yahweh is made. Such an emphasis on prayer is common in wisdom literature, and supports the point we have made all along: an emphasis on prayer led to the creation of psalmodic prayers, especially those of the lament-thanksgiving cycle, by the wise.

Job (The Dialogues)

Introduction. The religious and existential torment of a righteous man whose former religious convictions and personal self-identification become shattered by suffering, social ostracism, and a harsh reality reflecting a deity hostile to man is poignantly described by the Joban poet. Since Job is readily recognizable as

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legislation in Ezekiel (45:21-25). Other possiblities include the preference for the number seven in the narrative, and the possible influence by the offering made by Balaam in the Balaam Cycle in Num. 23:1f. as preserved in the Yahwist source.

[1] See Sheldon Blank, "Men Against God," *JBL*, LXII (1953), 1-14. Lindblom comments: "La prière d'intercession d'un homme de Dieu en faveur de personnes qui ont commis une faute est un trait charactéristique de la vie religieuse des Israélites. Abraham, Moïse, Samuel, Jérémie et beaucoup d'autre furent de grands intercesseurs auprès de Dieu en faveur de leur peuple." (*La composition du livre de Job*, p. 19).

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being part and parcel of the crisis stage of wisdom literature, it will be of interest to determine what are the views of the Joban poet with respect to cult.[1]

The debate over the date of the poetic Job is still continuing, with most scholars opting for a time somewhere between the seventh and third centuries. Our own tendency is to follow the arguments of Fohrer which place the book no earlier than fifth century Palestine.[2] Just as problematic is the question of the formal structure of the book with scholars supporting the Lament,[3] the "Paradigm of the Answered Lament,"[4] Legal Controversy (*rîbh*),[5] the Disputation,[6] and Greek Tragedy.[7] One scholar even suggests the book is *suis generis*.[8]

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[1] The crisis stage of Israelite wisdom literature was precipitated by the catastrophes of the exilic and early post-exilic period. For a discussion, see Schmid, *Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit*, pp. 173f.

[2] Pope places the book in the seventh century (*Job*, p. xxxvii), Eissfeldt in the fourth century (*The Old Testament*, p. 470), and Fohrer between the fifth and third centuries (*Das Buch Hiob*, p. 42).

[3] Westermann considers Job to be a dramatized lament (*Der Aufbau des Buches Hiob*, BHT, XXIII (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1956).

[4] H. Gese, *Lehre und Wirklichkeit*.

[5] Ludwig Köhler, "Justice in the Gate," *Hebrew Man* (London: SCM Press, 1956); and Heinz Richter, *Studien zu Hiob*, Theologische Arbeiten, XI (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, N.D.).

[6] Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, p. 50.

[7] Richard B. Sewall, "The Book of Job," *The Book of Job* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 21-35.

[8] Pope, *Job*, p. xxx.

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The complexity of the issue is understandable, since one can easily discover forms within the structure of the Dialogues which belong to the categories of Lament, rîbh, and Disputation. We tend to accept the position of Fohrer that the book best fits the formal structure of the Disputation, though certainly laments and elements of the rîbh are frequently found.

The Lament-Thanksgiving Cycle. Our major concern, however, is to examine the poet's views of cultic religion, an examination which would be doomed even before being initated, if we followed the observations of a number of Joban scholars. Humbert, no mean wisdom scholar himself, has commented:

> Une omission est caractéristique dans le livre de Job: l'effacement de la révélation de Dieu dans l'histoire d'Israël et par la Loi, le culte et ses rites.[1]

But as we shall demonstrate, the latter part of this comment is extremely dubious.

In our analysis of the three cycles of debate between Job and his three opponents, a central concern involves what is the proper response to be made with respect to suffering. As becomes obvious throughout the speeches of the opponents, their viewpoint is a traditionally cultic one, indicating that in this regard traditional wisdom, which is represented by the three opponents,[2] becomes the

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[1] "Le modernisme de Job," SVT, III (1955), 159.

[2] H. L. Ginsberg, "Job the Patient and Job the Impatient," Conservative Judaism, XXI (1967), 16f. In fact, as we shall see in Chapter V, the Thanksgiving-Lament cycle is most prominent in the Wisdom psalms, thus demonstrating the traditional wise affirmed

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handmaiden of the Israelite cult. Suffering to the opponents is an omen that the wrath or at the very least the displeasure of the deity has been incurred by some inadvertent or conscious action or negligence on the part of the one afflicted. Such a traditional explanation for suffering includes, therefore, the belief that the sufferer has sinned and is being punished by the deity, a viewpoint buttressed by the recurring rhetorical question:

> Can man be righteous before God?
> Can a man be pure before his Creator (4:17).[1]

A second, less elaborated, explanation is that suffering is discipline or chastisement meant to test the faith of the sufferer who should continue in his steadfast belief that the deity will soon redeem him from his affliction.[2] Now the crucial point for our investigation is the cultic response that Job is counseled to make concerning his suffering, and that response should be the uttering of a lament in the sanctuary to the deity in which one confesses his sins and pleads

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the theology and ritual of this cultic practice, which leads us to conclude that the Joban poet is criticizing the wise who wrote such psalms.

[1] Also 11:2, 14:4, 15:14, and 25:4. Cf. the statement in "The Sumerian Job": "Never has a sinless child been born to its mother,...a sinless workman has not existed from of old" (ll. 101f.; *ANET*, p. 590). 14:4 is especially interesting, in that cultic language of 'clean' and 'unclean' is used: מי־יתן טהור מטמא לא אחד. Zink has demonstrated that "in Job xiv, 4 the words used are those which occur in the legislation concerning cleanness and uncleanness, and, therefore, have a direct connection with cultic matters." Cf. Dt. 12:15, 22; 15:22; Lev. 5:2; 13:11f.; 15:2f.; and Num. 19:13f. This may demonstrate that the traditional wise accepted the cultic idea that ethical and ritual "sins" are the basis for punishment ("Uncleanness and Sin in Job 14:4 and Ps. 51:7," *VT*, XVII [1967], 354f.).

[2] 5:17f.

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for divine healing.[1] After the lament is offered, according to cultic ritual and the advice of the opponents, the priest consults the oracle and returns with the answer as to whether or not the lament is acceptable to the deity, and, if so, the worshipper is declared to be צדיק, that is, his 'righteousness' has returned to him, demonstrating divine forgiveness of the sufferer's sins. Following that, the deity is presumed to heal the individual who returns to the sanctuary to fulfill his vow to the deity made during the course of the lament, a vow usually involving the pledge to return to the sanctuary to offer up a thanksgiving psalm accompanied by a thanksgiving sacrifice before the cultic community during which he extols the deity for his redemptive powers. It is this cultic response to suffering that the opponents urge Job to make.

In the first speech by Eliphaz, the wise man advises Job:

> As for me, I would seek (אדרש) God,
> And to God would I commit my cause (5:8).

As is well known, דרש is the technical term used to indicate the approaching of the deity who resides in the cultic sanctuary in order to present cultic worship.[2] If Job would do so, says Eliphaz, then God would heal him from his affliction and would continue to protect

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[1] For an analysis of the lament, see Claus Westermann, "Struktur und Geschichte der Klage im Alten Testament," ZAW, LXVI (1954), 44f.

[2] Dt. 4:29; Hos. 10:12; Am. 5:4, b; Is. 9:12; 31:1; 55:6; Pss. 9:11; 22:27; 34:5, 11; and 119:2, 10. See Claus Westermann, "Die Begriffe für Fragen und Suchen im Alten Testament," KuD, VI (1960), 2-30.

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him from destruction (5:17f.). Bildad's first discourse affirms this counsel of Eliphaz:[1]

> If you will seek (תשחר) God and make supplication (התחנן)
> to the Almighty,
> If you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse
> himself for you, and reward you with a rightful
> habitation (8:5-6).

שחר is a term meaning "to seek out God" by means of coming to the sanctuary with a penitential psalm (Ps. 78:34; Hos. 5:15), while חנן means "to implore the favor" of God in the offering of a prayer of petition in the sanctuary (I Kgs. 8:33, 47). Zophar gives Job the same counsel in his first speech (11:13-15):

> If you set your heart aright, then you will stretch out your
> hands toward him.
> If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away and let not
> wickedness dwell in your tent.
> Then you will lift up your face without blemish, you will be
> secure, and will not be afraid.

The "stretching out of the hands toward God" is a reference to the customary manner of praying in which one extends his arms heavenward with palms turned upward to demonstrate that one's hands are "clean," that is, free of sin.[2] And if God judges one to be so, then the prayer will be answered, one's "face will be lifted up."[3] The image of hands which are judged to be without blemish points to the cultic ritual of the removal of sins by means of washing one's hands in a solution of soap and lye, after which the prayer is offered by the supplicant who demonstrates he has approached the deity without the stain of sin. Eliphaz mentions this ritual in 22:30: "You will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands." Job's response to the ritual is that it would have no lasting effect due to the malicious nature of a capricious deity: "If I wash myself with soap,[1] and cleanse my hands with lye, yet you (God) will plunge me into a pit, and my own clothes will abhor me" (9:30-31).

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[1] See Fohrer, Das Buch Hiob, pp. 149f.

[2] E.g., Ex. 9:28f.; I Kgs. 8:22; and Isa. 1:15. Such a process was also used in the legal context of the ordeal (Dt. 21:1-9). See Fohrer, Das Buch Hiob, p. 211. Isa. 1:15f. speaks of Israelites whose outstretched hands are stained with blood, and therefore, their prayers are unacceptable. To remove the stain they are to put away evil, be just, and to wash themselves clean.

[3] The "lifting of the face" is an expression for the acceptance

In chapter 22, Eliphaz once more advises Job to make this cultic response by indicating that he should first "remove unrighteousness" from his life and then be confident that his cultic devotion will be accepted:

> You will make your prayer (תעתיר)[2] to him, and he will hear you; and you will pay your vows...You will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands.

The paying of vows refers to the obligation that the one lamenting binds upon himself, if the prayer is answered favorably. Such a vow in the lament involved the worshipper returning to the sanctuary and offering a thanksgiving sacrifice accompanied by a psalm of thanksgiving (see Pss. 22:26; 50:14).

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by God of one's prayer (e.g., Job 42:8).

[1] Fohrer demonstrates that שלג in this context is not "snow" but rather a soapy solution made from Seifenpflanzen (Das Buch Hiob, p. 211).

[2] This term for prayer, עתר, may indicate a type of prayer which is accompanied by incense (See Ezek. 8:11).

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The most detailed reference to this cultic response to suffering is made in the Elihu interpolation[1] in 33:18-33.[2] After describing the typical situation of the sufferer in vv. 19-22, Elihu then delineates the elements of the lament-thanksgiving cycle and counsels Job to engage in the ritual. First of all, Elihu refers to a מלאך ("messenger"), also referred to as a מליץ ("mediator"), who "declares to a man he is upright" (להגיד לאדם ישרו). Irwin has argued, among others, in a most perceptive article that this may be a reference to a redeemer figure in the council of Yahweh, a figure with parallels in ancient Near Eastern mythology (see 9:32-33; 16: 19-22; 19:25-27; and 26:6-7).[3] However, we suggest that the מלאך is a cultic official whose duty it is to examine the would-be supplicant and declare him to be צדיק, a function indicated by the statement להגיד לאדם ישרו.[4] Furthermore, the priestly official not only

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[1] The majority of Joban scholars have concluded that the Elihu material is a later interpolation (See W. A. Irwin, "The Elihu Speeches in the Criticism of Job," JR, XVII (1937), 37-47; and Fohrer, "Die Weisheit des Elihu (Hi 32-37)," Studien zum Buche Hiob, 87-107.

[2] See S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray, The Book of Job, ICC, XIV (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1921), pp. 291f.; Gustav Hölscher, Das Buch Hiob, HAT, XVII (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck),1952), 88; and Samuel Terrien, "The Book of Job," IB, III (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 1138f.

[3] W. A. Irwin, "Job's Redeemer," JBL, LXXXI (1962), 217f.

[4] Mal. 2:7f.; Koh. 5:6. Such an examination would consist of determining the worshipper's moral and ritual status (see Pss. 15 and 24). That the מליץ is a cultic mediator may be seen in Isa. 43:27 where מליצים are paralleled to the "princes of the sanctuary." "One of a 1,000" is a rather enigmatic expression but possibly refers to the various divisions of cultic officials into groups of one thousand as was common in the Chronicler (I Chr. 23-24).

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acknowledges that the supplicant is צדיק and may petition the deity, he makes entreaty[1] on his behalf because he has "found the ransom" (מצאתי כפר). The כפר may refer to a legal or cultic payment to be paid by the supplicant in order to 'redeem his life,' that is to keep the divine anger from destroying him.[2] Because the כפר has been paid, the priest makes entreaty on behalf of the worshipper, and asks God to act in good faith by removing his affliction and healing him. Following this intercession by the cultic official, the supplicant's lament is said to be accepted by the deity (וירצהו),[3] another cultic term indicating a decision made by a priest that the worship is acceptable to God.[4] Then the supplicant either immediately following the acceptance of the lament or later, after his healing, offers a psalm of thanksgiving praising the deity for his deliverance ("he will see his face accompained by the cultic joyful shout").[5]

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[1] It seems probable that the priestly official himself offers the penitential psalm for the worshipper.

[2] The כפר is mentioned in Ex. 21:30 in the legal context and is the price of 'redemption' paid by one whose crime would cost his life, if a redemption price were not set by the judges to allow the man to "pay for his crime" in lieu of his life. One example of a כפר in the cultic context is the sanctuary tax paid by each male over twenty years of age at the time of the census, in order to keep the punishment of the plague, which was believed caused by census-taking, from destroying the people, and thus those who pay are 'redeemed' from destruction (Ex. 30:11f.).

[3] II Sam. 24:23; Hos. 8:13; and Ex. 28:38.

[4] Such a decision probably involved a Heilsorakel in which the priest, having consulted the deity, announces 'salvation' to the supplicant (see J. Begrich, "Das priesterliche Heilsorakel," ZAW, LI (1934), 81f.

[5] Driver and Gray, op. cit., pp. 291f. The "Cultic Shout of

In the course of the psalm, he confesses his trangression and praises the deity for not destroying him for the transgression and for delivering him from the hands of death.[1] Finally Elihu urges Job to engage in this cultic response, identifying what he has described as חכמה.

In turning to Job's position with respect to the lament-thanksgiving response to suffering, he mentions that during his former days he, too, was one whose lament had been answered:

> A derision to his neighbor I am become,
> One whose God answered (ענהו) when he called (קרא),
> The just and perfect a derision (12:4).

But now he faces the perplexing agony that God refuses to answer his lament with a recognition of his innocence of sin and to redeem him from suffering. In a blasphemous rage Job denies he has committed any sin of which he is conscious, and, therefore, he has no reason to "remove wickedness from his tent" and to confess his sins before the deity in his lament. Thus Job moves to attack the interpretation of the wise opponents and priests concerning the lament-thanksgiving cycle, since the deity has refused to act in good faith and acknowledge his innocence.[2] He accuses God of being a malicious despot whose

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joy" (תרועה) is made by the cultic singers who sing the psalm of thanksgiving (Ps. 27:6).

[1] There is no reference to the תודה sacrifice, but it is probably implied (see Pss. 107:22; 100:1; 116:17).

[2] G. von Rad points to Job's realization that he can declare his own innocence, but for his innocence to be vindicated he has to receive the pronouncement of God. In such a recognition, Job's viewpoint is the same as the lamenters in the "Laments of Innocence" in the Psalter (see Pss. 7 and 17). "It is interesting to see to

superiority to Job rests only in his power, and certainly not in matters of justice. Job's integrity refuses to permit him to engage in the sham and pretense of the facade of confession of sins, especially to a malevolent and capricious God (27:1-6).[1]

In the Joban poet's reflection on the lament-thanksgiving process, Milgrom has pointed to an important issue that should be remembered. Job is one who refuses to accept the cultic dogma, apparently supported by the friends, that he may be punished severely for crimes of which he has no recollection, that is, unconscious sins.[2] This is the reason he constantly demands from the opponents and God evidence that he has committed an inadvertent sin of which he is aware (6:24). In sanctioning the idea of punishment only for inadvertent, conscious sins, Job removes the causal nexus between sin and punishment out of the realm of the unconscious violation of taboo.[3]

In chapters 29-31, Job once more demands from the deity a recognition of his innocence, even though he does not believe the deity will act justly and redeem him. Again we find him engaging in the lament process in which his "lament of innocence" is similar to that specific type of lament in the Psalter, but with one important

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what extent Job here is still living among specifically cultic ideas, perhaps to an even greater extent than his friends" (*Wisdom in Israel*, 219).

[1] Job argues that God maliciously mistreats even the leaders of society, including the priests, and withholds insight from them.

[2] Jacob Milgrom, "The Cultic *Š^{e}gāgā* and its Influence in Psalms and Job," *JQR*, LVIII (1967), 115-125.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

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exception: he expresses no confident hope that God will redeem him, but rather affirms that he knows the deity will soon put him to death. In chapters 29-30, as is common to the lament, Job contrasts the "Then and Now" of his existence. In pictorial pathos, Job painfully recalls his former existence which was characterized by favor with God, wealth, honor, family, and the secure hope for a long and prosperous life, wishing, but never believing, that God would restore him to this former position (29:2). The "Now" is lamented in chapter 30 (ועתה, 30:1), which includes poverty, disgrace, social ostracism so intense that even the dregs of humanity scoff at him, an unbearable agony of mind and body, and, worst of all, his lack of hope that the deity will redeem him: "I cry (אשוע) to you, but you do not answer me (לא תענני)." He bewails being brought to the edge of death by this malevolent deity who has turned against him, ignoring his cry for help in the cultic assembly (30:28b). Finally, in chapter 31, Job not only takes the final and drastic step to prove beyond all doubt his innocence in the "Oath of Innocence," he also uses this process to challenge the deity to a Streitsrede in which he could prove that the deity, not he, is the one who is unjust.[1]

Finally, God appears in a storm theophany and responds to Job's lament and his challenge. If Tsevat's superb analysis is correct, then the point of the Yahweh speeches is to dash to pieces

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[1] Fohrer, Das Buch Hiob, p. 427. For a recent treatment of Job 31, see Fohrer, "The Righteous Man in Job 31," Essays in Old Testament Ethics (New York: Ktav, 1974), pp. 1-22.

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forever the idea that justice is the order permeating reality, and consequently, the principle of retribution. Furthermore, the God who appears to Job "is neither a just nor an unjust god but God."[1] Or as Kluger has cogently perceived, the irrational and malevolent side of God is revealed and is to be accepted by Job.[2] With such a conclusion, what happens to the cultic response of the lament-thanksgiving? Job's response appears to be the lament in which he "repents in dust and ashes." (42:6). But for what reason? Certainly not in the theological understanding of the lament that a just and merciful deity would redeem the penitent, righteous man. Rather, Job's response takes a new and daring step: he worships the deity from the perspective of disinterested piety, expecting neither reward nor punishment for his worship, but rather worships from the position of one overcome by the mystery and awesomeness of the rational-irrational deity.[3]

Apostasy: the Unforgivable Sin. In returning to the "Oath of Innocence," it is interesting that in Job's denial of having committed sins which were punishable by the verdict of death, he refers to only

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[1] "The Meaning of the Book of Job," HUCA, XXXVII (1966), 73-106.

[2] Satan in the Old Testament (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), pp. 119f.

[3] The reference to the lament-thanksgiving cycle is excellent evidence that the wise reflected on cultic ritual and theology, and at times even rejected some of the basic premises of cultic theology.

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one cultic crime: apostasy, which was a crime punishable by death (31:26-28).[1] In the typical form of the self-imprecation, Job denies that he has been unfaithful to God by engaging in astral worship:[2]

> If I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon
> moving in splendor,
> And my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has
> kissed my hand,
> This also would be a crime worthy of being judged, because
> I would have been deceitful to God above.

Cults of astral deities were quite common in ancient Near Eastern religions, thus making it difficult to discover which astral deities are being mentioned in this context. But if the dating of the poetic

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[1] Dt. 13:6f. The lack of references to sacrifice in the speeches of Job is perplexing, especially when one sees the numerous references to sacrifices in such Joban literature as "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom " and "The Babylonian Theodicy." However, it should be noted that the "Sumerian Job" and the sufferer in Nougayrol's text do not refer to sacrifice. While this omission could indicate a similar feeling toward sacrifice found among the people in the time of Malachi and Ezra-Nehemiah, arguments based on silence are unconvincing. One could just as well argue that the cultic piety of the Job in the narrative is presupposed in the Dialogues, or even accept Rowley's point that Job could not sacrifice the animals he no longer possessed (Job, The Century Bible (Don Mills, Ontario: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1970), p. 10).

[2] Chapter 31 has 16 self-imprecations consisting of the following formal elements: the protasis, consisting of two, sometimes three parts and introduced by the conditional אם or אם לא, which states the particular sin Job is denying; and the apodosis, containing the particular curse which will overwhelm Job if he is lying. Such a series of oaths is comparable to the one in the 125th chapter of the Book of the Dead in Egypt and to the Babylonian Shurpu texts, though the Israelite setting is either the courtroom or the offering of the lament. We have concluded that the specific setting for Job's series of oaths is the offering of a lament in which the lamenter proves his innocence by taking the "Oath of Innocence" (see Pss. 7 and 17). For studies dealing with the oath, see Sheldon Blank, "The Curse, Blasphemy, the Spell, and the Oath," HUCA, XXIII (1950/51), 73-95; and J. Scharbert, "'Fluchen' und 'Segen' im Alten Testament," Bib, XXXIX (1958), 1-26.

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book is in the sixth to fifth centuries, the two deities are probably Shamash and Sin.[1] Furthermore, Job's denial that his "mouth has kissed his hand" is most certainly a reference to the Akkadian ideogram for prayer (ikribu) in which the hand touches the mouth. Such cultic gestures appear on the Code of Hammurabi and on other Babylonian and Assyrian monuments.[2] In addition, McKay's comments give us additional insight into the crime Job denies he has committed:

> The stars and constellations were often regarded as numinous and powerful in magic and astrology and could be involved in prayer. Observation of the stars and planets therefore played a not inconsiderable role in Mesopotamian religious circles.[3]

While Job denies he has committed the sin of apostasy, it may not be fortuitous that the cultic act he has refrained from doing is the act of prayer to other gods. Such gives us additional insight into the views of the Joban poet with respect to cult, and we find him aligned with the traditional wise in Proverbs 1-9 who admonished against participation in fertility religion and, as we shall see, with the same counsel of avoiding apostasy treated in the Wisdom of Solomon.[4]

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[1] McKay, Religion in Judah Under the Assyrians, pp. 45f. Our passage is very similar to the Assyrian cult warned against in Dt. 4:19.

[2] E. Dhorme, Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie, p. 248. See The Assyrian Dictionary (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1960), pp. 62f.

[3] McKay, op. cit., p. 48.

[4] There are many examples of psalmodic genres in the Dialogues besides the lament (Cf. Jean Lévêque, Job et son Dieu, I, Études Bibliques (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1970), pp. 312f.; and Georg Fohrer, "Form und Funktion in der Hiobdichtung," Studien zum Buche Hiob, pp. 68-86). Such texts demonstrate what is intended by the

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Koheleth

Introduction. Koheleth also comes from the legacy of the critical wisdom tradition, having been written in Hebrew by a Palestinian sage in third century Jerusalem and placed in the form of a first person narration.[1] In Koheleth's attack on the ideological structure of his traditional opponents, we should find fertile ground for an examination of the views of the critical wise concerning cult.[2]

As we shall discover, what Koheleth says of cult is grounded in his intense reflections concerning reality, a reality which he discovers to be inaccessible to the penetrations of sapiential scrutiny, and, thus, for a sage, devoid of the possibilities for a

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reference to 'songs' among the sapiential creations attributed to Solomon (I Kgs. 4:29f.). Gordis has cogently argued: "Poetry in general, and lamentation in particular, constituted an important segment of the wisdom activity which was carried on in ancient Israel by the Hakhamim and Hakhamot, men and women skilled in the arts of composition." ("Wisdom and Job," Old Testament Issues (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 228). We should mention the "Poem Concerning Wisdom" in Job 28 which consists of four symmetrical strophes, each consisting of seven stichs, 3 + 3 meter, and introduced by a refrain in the form of the catechetical question: "But where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding." Generally, such questions were answered in proverbial replies (Prov. 23:2af.; Koh. 2:12, 22f.; 8:1, etc.), but this author argues that the answer is hidden to human understanding and known only by God. Such a well structured poem which has its structure formed around a simple wisdom form provides us with a major clue to the identification and analysis of wisdom psalms in the Psalter.

[1] Robert Gordis, "Qoheleth and Qumran--A Study of Style," Bib, XLI (1960), 395-410. For an excellent examination of the structure of Koheleth, see Addison Wright, "The Riddle of the Sphinx: The Structure of the Book of Qoheleth," CBQ, XXX (1968), 313-334.

[2] For a comparison of Koheleth and other ancient Near Eastern critical wisdom literature, see Oswald Loretz, Qohelet und der Alte Orient (Freiburg: Herder, 1964).

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meaningful human existence. Koheleth's despair over the absence of meaning in human existence results from his unsuccessful quest to determine a tangible answer to his central question: מה־טוב לאדם בחיים.[1] But, of course, to the sages such meaning was intimately tied to one's ability to perceive and understand some sort of order of reality which, having been perceived and comprehended, could provide the direction for the sage's own efforts to find his place, function, and time within the scheme of reality. But Koheleth finds no grand, comprehensive order which embraces the spheres of reality, and certainly no 'righteous' order permeating existence as did his traditional counterparts.[2] To Koheleth the severe limitations of human knowledge and understanding which are the result of man's own finite existence and the capricious action of the deity who has placed "confusion, mystery" (עלם)[3] into the human mind make it impossible to perceive any order in reality. Furthermore, existence in an irrational reality is complicated by an inscrutable, arbitrary, capricious deity, capable of and responsible for both good and evil (7:14), the one who is the Deus absconditus, incapable of being known, but most certainly feared.[4] Such an irrational reality coupled with an inscrutable, and yet terrifying deity, finally lead Koheleth to a total abandonment of the one sapiential dogma to which he tried so desperately to cling, the principle of retribution.[1]

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[1] See Zimmerli's discussion: "Zur Struktur der alttestamentlichen Weisheit," ZAW, LI (1933), 177-204.

[2] Il affirme que l'ordre du monde est absurde, arbitraire, injuste..." (J. Pedersen, "Scepticisme israelite," RHPhR, X (1930), 364.

[3] Reading עלם for MT עֹלָם "eternity." (See Scott, Proverbs. Ecclesiastes, p. 221).

[4] Müller comments: "Qohälät's Gott ist Urheber einer

Having denied theological and cosmological meaning, Koheleth turns to a radical anthropocentricity, hoping to find something which could provide man with a meaningful existence, but once again his efforts are futile. Wealth, power, and satiation of human appetites are experienced by the sage and found devoid of any meaning. Even human toil, the endeavor to create something lasting, significant, noteworthy,provides no meaningful existence in a deterministic reality where the only actions of any consequence are those of the deity, whereas man's own efforts are reduced to meaningless motion, unguided by a perception of the structure of time, stripped of any potential for significance, and incapable of producing any change.[2]

The Wisdom tradition, as a result, has become bankrupt, defeated in its attempts to understand an irrational reality, an enigmatic, inscrutable deity, and to find any place and meaningful function for its adherents. Its doctrines have become vanquished in

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problematisch gewordenen Welt; der iniator mundi ist zum Deus absconditus geworden." (Wie Sprach Qohälät von Gott?" VT, XVIII (1968), pp. 507f.). Crenshaw's superb analysis of this "fear" of God in terms of terror is found in his article, "The Eternal Gospel," Essays in Old Testament Ethics (New York: Ktav, 1974), pp. 23-56.

[1] "Er vermag nicht mehr, das Vorhandensein einer gerechten Vergeltung anzuerkennen." (A. Lauha, "Die Krise des religiösen Glaubens bei Koheleth," SVT, III (1955), 185).

[2] See H. W. Hertzberg, Der Prediger, KAT, XVII (Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gerd Mohn, 1963), pp. 222f.; and H. Gese, "Die Krisis der Weisheit bei Koheleth," SPOA, p. 140.

the arena of human experience. The only certainty that knowledge can produce is the certainty of death as the common lot of all men.

To Koheleth's question, מה טוב לאדם בחיים, the only 'good' is centered in a divine gift of joy that enables one to find some pleasure in his labor and family (2:26; 3:22; 5:18-20; 7:14; 9:7-10; 11:7), a joy that aids in dulling the torment of a meaningless existence.[1] Yet even the experience of joy is problematic, because its reception is dependent not upon wealth, power, and labor (6:1-9), but upon an arbitrary, incalculable decision by the deity. And the basis upon which he seems to dispense joy is the enigmatic statement by Koheleth that he gives joy to those who please him (2:26), and yet the tragedy of even this one small boon is that one never knows how to please the deity, unless the answer rests in the repeated statement by Koheleth that one should "fear god." "Fear of god" to Koheleth is actual fear, fear of an unknowable power who has the ability to destroy or to reward, to dispense joy or to withhold it. Furthermore, "fear of god" to Koheleth signals the attitude of 'resignation,' resignation to an irrational reality, to an inscrutable God, to a meaningless

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[1] In contrasting Koheleth to the Joban poet who stresses that meaning in human existence comes from the encounter with the divine, Crenshaw remarks: "Qoheleth can find no such meaning anywhere; this author is convinced that life is empty, vain, profitless. Neither material possessions, human friendship, nor religious devotion alter the fact that nature is oppressive, that death is the negation of all good, that God is therefore untouched by the plight of his creatures. What then is man to do? Qoheleth advises him to find some pleasure in wife and children, and to work with dignity, in this way postponing death as long as possible." ("Popular Questioning of the Justice of God," p. 389).

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existence, and finally to the inescapable conclusion that regardless of one's actions, social position, and character, death is the final lot of every man.[1]

Koheleth's Views of Cult. Koheleth's views of cult are found primarily in the form of an instruction concerning cult, separated from the surrounding materials by a different form, and occurring in 5:1-7 (Heb. 4:17-5:6). A form-cirtical analysis and translation are as follows:[2]

	Sacrifice and Obedience
Admonition (1)	Watch your step whenever you approach the temple of God,
Motive Clause ("Better Saying")	(For) it is better to draw near to listen than to offer the sacrifice of fools,[3]
Circumstantial Clause (Koheleth's Comment)	Since they have no knowledge of doing evil.

	Prayer
Admonition (2)	Be not hasty with your mouth, nor let your heart be quick to utter a word before the deity.
Motive Clause (Proverb)	(Because) the deity is in heaven and you are upon the earth.
Result Clause (Koheleth's Comment)	Therefore let your words be few.

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[1] See Müller, op. cit., p. 510; and Egon Pfeiffer, "Die Gottesfurcht im Buche Kohelet," Gottes Wort und Gottes Land (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1965), pp. 133-158.

[2] See Walther Zimmerli, Sprüche. Prediger, ATD, XVI (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1962), 127f.

[3] Most scholars have translated v. 1b as a "Better Saying" in spite of the absence of the customary טוב (see Gordis, Koheleth, The Man and His World, 3rd ed. (N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1968), p. 247.

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Motive Clause (Proverb)	(Because) a dream comes on account of much activity, and the voice of a fool with many words.

Vow

Admonition (3)	Whenever you make a vow to the deity, do not delay in paying it.
Motive Clause (Proverb)	(Because) there is no pleasure in fools.
Admonition Restated (Koheleth's Comment)	Whatever you vow, pay.
Motive Clause ("Better Saying")	It is better than you do not vow, than to vow and not pay it.

Willful Sin

Admonition (4)	Do not allow your mouth to cause you to sin, and do not say before the priest that it was an unconscious sin.
Motive Clause (Koheleth's Comment)	Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hand.
Motive Clause (Proverb)	(For) when dreams increase so do vanities and words,
Admonition (Koheleth's imperative)	But even so, fear God.

As the form-critical analysis demonstrates, Koheleth utilized the style of the teacher in issuing four admonitions, all of which deal with the realm of the cult: sacrifice and obedience, prayer, vows, and willful sin. The admonitions consist of imperatives and prohibitions buttressed by the addition of motive clauses which demonstrate why a particular admonition merits obedience. What is intriguing is the fact that most of the motive clauses are constructed from proverbial sayings and better sayings. Furthermore, Koheleth's adaptations of traditional material may be seen in his additions of comments in strategic places which give us a better insight into his own expressions concerning cult.

In the first admonition, Koheleth establishes the tone for the entire unit: "Be careful when you approach the temple of God."[1] Guarded caution, perhaps even fearful foreboding, is the proper decorum in the realm of the holy, for the impassioned fool, the religious ecstatic, will quickly meet his end from his foolish behavior which arouses the destructive power of the deity.[2] And it is significant that Koheleth's counsel concerning cultic behavior contains an emphasis only on the negative, destructive side of the sacral realm, and nothing whatsoever of the beneficence believed to be derived from the cult by priestly traditions. To Koheleth, fear, extreme caution, a lack of religious passion, and a cool disdain for the frenetic fanatic remain the proper virtues of the wise cultist.

Koheleth's imperative is supported by a motivation in the form of a "Better Saying": "(For) to draw near to listen is better than the sacrifice of fools." This saying is quite similar to the one attributed to Samuel in his castigation of King Saul in I Sam. 15:27--"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice," thus supporting the conclusion that such a saying was commonly known.[1] לשמע may be translated either "to listen" or "to obey," and though the object of the infinitive is left unstated, it may well be "instruction" offered by the priest or levite (see Pss. 15, 24; Ezek. 18; Lev. 19). Again we find a contrast being made with sacrifice, and we are faced with the possibility that sacrifice is rejected by Koheleth, especially in what appears as his own comment appended to the "Better Saying": "Since they have no knowledge of doing evil." It would be possible to regard Koheleth's comment as intimating that sacrifice is foolish and evil. However, as indicated before, a "Better Saying" does not necessarily imply that one thing is good and the other is bad, but rather in the value system of the sages, one is to be preferred over the other. Thus, in our case, "hearing" or "obeying" is to be preferred over the offering of "the sacrifice of fools." Again it should be noted that sacrifice is qualified by the statement "of fools," who in sapiential traditions are identified with "the wicked," those who are not wise and prudent, who do not observe the dictates of the wise, and who are not followers of "order." Further, Koheleth's comment ("they have no knowledge of doing evil") may be taken to mean that fools offer sacrifice without having the insight to know that with respect to their behavior in life they are perpetrators of evil, transgressors of the dictates of "order," and consequently offer a cultic sacrifice which is considered to be valueless, and,

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[1] The expression Koheleth uses for "temple" is בית האלהים (see II Sam. 12:20; Isa. 37:1; etc.).

[2] Cf. Ani iv, 1f. A fearful caution should characterize the cultic participant, since the deity, though inscrutable, is a destructive power with which to reckon, and, therefore, should not be offended. Like the king, he can consume the unwary.

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[1] I Sam. 15:22 הנה שמע מזבח טוב
Koh. קרב לשמע מתת הכסילים זבח

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in fact, even compounds their guilt.[1] Obedience to priestly "instruction" concerning the צדיק who may enter the realm of the holy is better than fools who disregard instruction and offer sacrifice. In addition, if the more specific meaning of זבח ("communion sacrifice") is intended, then Koheleth would be affirming the priestly instruction that such a sacrifice may be offered only by a צדיק, and not by one who has breached the sacral orders.

The second admonition concerns a warning to the wise with respect to prayer, and once again a cultic act is viewed with caution, and a warning is issued to avoid imprudent, hasty behavior in the realm of the holy: "Be not hasty with your mouth, nor let your heart be quick to utter a word before the deity." Such an admonition is based on the sapiential ideal of the "silent man," one who thinks before speaking, in contrast to the "passionate man" who speaks before carefully thinking, and thus acts foolishly. The motive clause is structured from an antithetical proverb by which Koheleth wishes to emphasize the distance between the inscrutable deity and men: "(Because) the deity is in heaven and you are upon the earth," a saying which appears to be taken from Dt. 4:29,[2] but with an interesting twist:

יהוה הוא האלהים בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת - Dt.
כי אלהים בשמים ואתה על הארץ -Koh.

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[1] Rudi Kroeber, Der Prediger (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1963), p. 139.

[2] Ibid.

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Thus Koheleth's point concerning prayer is intimately linked to his theological emphasis upon the deity as a Deus absconditus who is completely hidden from human cognition, thus indicating perhaps Koheleth's doubts concerning the cultic dogma of a deity who is revealed in the sanctuary and could be approached and induced to act favorably on one's behalf in the offering of a petition. And Koheleth's addition, "therefore let your words be few," opposes the behavior of the foolish cultist who believes by the constant petitioning and repetition of certain "power-laden" formulae he can induce divine action on his behalf. Koheleth supports his counsel by the addition of a synonymous proverb: "(Because) the dream comes on account of much activity, and the voice of a fool with many words." This is a most enigmatic saying, and is open to a number of interpretations. Some scholars have suggested that the saying alludes to the activity of the cult prophet (or Levitical singer who in the post-exilic period took over the functions of the cult prophet), who having heard the request of the supplicant obtains an oracle by means of a dream and then delivers to the worshipper the divine decision.[1] If so, then Koheleth would be lambasting the cultic prophet who believes he has knowledge of the inscrutable deity, which to Koheleth is inconceivable. Scott has suggested that the first part of the proverb is quoted only for the sake of completeness and that Koheleth's emphasis is on the latter part, that is, he is counseling the cultic participant to avoid excessive speaking in the sanctuary.[1] However, in our opinion, Koheleth is alluding to the reason that one is in the sanctuary to offer the prayer: he had been the recipient of a terrifying dream which he has taken as a divine warning from the deity of punishment for some misdeed. That such dreams were considered to be omens of warning to the wise is indicated in Job 4:12f. and 33:14f. The terrified person would then come to the cult to present his lament, or to relate his dream to a cult prophet whose function it was to interpret the meaning of such dreams. Thus Koheleth's point is that a dream follows much activity, ענין, which in Koheleth is used with the negative connotation of the "task" of men who live in a world in which toil and activities pursued have no meaningful significance or ability to produce change, but rather such actions are simply motion. Thus the reason for one's dream is his meaningless toil, and it is not connected to the so-called science of omenology in which dreams were seen to be signs of specific, future events. Such is compared in the proverb to the observation that only a fool is extremely loqacious, and thus even in the cult speaks unendingly in the false hopes of obtaining divine aid.

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[1] Ibid., p. 140.

Koheleth's third admonition contains a warning against hasty vows: "Whenever you make a vow to the deity, do not delay in paying it." In this admonition Koheleth warns the wise, not to avoid making a vow completely, but rather to consider carefully the obligation

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[1] Scott, Proverbs. Ecclesiastes, p. 227.

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before being bound to it.[1] In the making of a vow, prudence enables the wise man not only to avoid making an unwise vow, but at the same time causes him to realize the folly of making a vow and not fulfilling it: "(Because) there is no pleasure in fools." This proverbial statement demonstrates the extreme displeasure of the deity with respect to those who do not fulfill their vows. חפץ is often found with respect to whether or not someone or some action is "pleasing," "acceptable" to the deity (I Kg. 10:9; II Sam. 15:26; Ps. 22:8). Koheleth's own addition to the saying is an emphatic imperative "Whatever you vow, pay." A vow is to be taken as a serious obligation. He underlines his imperative with a better saying: "It is better that you do not vow, than for you to make a vow and not pay it." The same attitude concerning the vow is found in cultic traditions, demonstrating that in this regard Koheleth is in agreement with the priests.[2] Even to Koheleth, the vow is a serious cultic obligation, once it is made, and failure to carry out the vow places one in a precarious situation.

Koheleth's fourth admonition has been interpreted in different ways, since it is a rather engimatic admonition: "Do not allow your mouth to cause you to sin, and do not say before the priest that it was an unconscious sin." Generally, Koheleth scholars have regarded the prohibition as connected to the earlier admonition concerning the

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[1] Hertzberg, op. cit., p. 122.

[2] See Dt. 23:22-24; Num. 30:1f.

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vow, and thus interpret it to be a warning against hasty vows which cannot be paid when the "priestly official" comes to collect payment, for the result is punishment by the deity.[1] However, we choose to suggest another possibility. The two-fold prohibition in v. 6 marks the beginning of a new admonition, and it would seem redundant simply to repeat what had earlier been said. Rather the admonition concerning foolish speech appears to involve the "willful sin" in which one commits a sin willfully and with full awareness of the fact that his action is sinful. Thus the first prohibition warns one not to commit a willful sin, and the second warns one not to compound one's guilt by lying to the "priestly official" by saying that it was a שגגה, that is, an inadvertent or unconscious sin. The מלאך we would suggest is the priest who gives instruction to the worshippers to determine those who are צדיקים and may participate in cult.[2] Thus, one should not commit a willful sin, and then try to pass it off as a שגגה to the priest. A willful sin could not be forgiven in the cult, and punishment, at times even destruction for serious sins, had to be borne by the sinner. Such punishment is pointed to by Koheleth when he adds his own comment as a motive clause in the form of a question: "Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands." מעשה to Koheleth is the major source for "joy,"

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[1] Mitchell Dahood, "Canaanite-Phoenician Influence in Qoheleth," Bib, XXXIII (1952), 207. Gordis considers the מלאך to be "the Pharisaic scholar who acts as God's representative in annulling the vow." (Koheleth, p. 249).

[2] Mal. 2:7f.

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the one thing in life that makes living tolerable (e.g., 3:22). Thus such a foolish action in which one commits a willful sin and then compounds his guilt by trying to say it was only an inadvertent or unconscious sin results in the wrath of the deity and consequently leads to the destruction of the major source of joy. Such "joy" or "satisfaction" is the motivation for Koheleth's entire ethic. Koheleth once more buttresses his admonition with a proverbial saying that is rather enigmatic: "(For) when dreams increase, so do vanities and words."[1] Once again Koheleth seems to suggest that after the reception of omens there is a tremendous flurry of cultic activities by frenetic fools who foolishly believe that their frenzied behavior in the cult will influence the deity to act on their behalf, activities which Koheleth finds repugnant not only because they oppose the ideal model of sapiential behavior, but also because destruction is the punishment for foolish behavior in the cult. Further, Koheleth rejects the notion that cultic behavior can influence an inscrutable, capricious deity to act beneficently on one's behalf. Koheleth adds his final comment to the instruction, "But even so, fear God." In terms of the structure of the entire instruction, the final statement refers back to the initial statement of "watching one's step," indicating that 'fear of God' in this context intimates that extreme caution, a fearful foreboding, should characterize the

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[1] The ב we consider to be temporal "when" (cf. Gen. 2:4; 4:8); and the ו as a waw apodosis, "then." (see Williams, Hebrew Syntax, no. 440).

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wise man when he enters the realm of the cult.[1] Much of what takes place in the cult may be foolish, ecstatic behavior, even meaningless, and in addition, the opposite of what is desired may result: destruction by the deity. Koheleth does not admonish his students to avoid cultic participation; such he takes for granted. But he warns them of the potential for destruction, and advises them to exude wise, prudent behavior. Furthermore, the idea of divine beneficence through the channel of cult is never mentioned, for Koheleth's world-view would never allow an affirmation of any means to influence a hidden, engimatic, capricious deity. The only actions which affect the deity in the cultic realm are foolish ones which may arouse the divine wrath and bring punishment to the fool.

In Koheleth's attack of the pious wise in chapters 7 and 8, there is another reference to cult occurring in 8:10 in the context of Koheleth's reflecting over the abuse of justice and the lack of any retributory principle:

> Subsequently I saw the wicked draw near (to worship),[2]
> For they would come and go from the temple,[3]
> And would be praised[4] in the city, where they had acted thus.
> This also is vanity.

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[1] See Egon Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 157.

[2] Reading קרבים instead of קברים, a probable example of transposition of characters.

[3] The temple, tabernacle, and the area surrounding the sanctuary are called מקום קדוש (see Ex. 29:31; Lv. 6:9, 19, 20; etc.).

[4] Reading with a number of Heb. Mss. and the major versions וישתבחו instead of וישתכחו. For an excellent discussion of the textual difficulties in this passage, see J. C. Serrano, "I Saw the Wicked Buried," CBQ, XVI (1954), 68-70.

Koheleth despairs over the lack of justice in a world that permits praise of the wicked for their pompous show of cultic devotion and that does not bring punishment to them for their wickedness. Even in the realm of the cult, retribution does not operate.

In 9:2 Koheleth refers to cultic activities in the context of despairing over the shroud of darkness which engulfs humanity with respect to knowledge of divine activity. Furthermore he reflects over the affirmation by the traditional wise that the wise and their deeds are under the beneficent care of the deity, and adds sarcastically that if God does watch over the wise and their deeds, it is impossible to know whether it is because God loves them or hates them. Then Koheleth comments with respect to the righteous-wise:

> All that is before them is vanity.[1] Because to everyone there is the same fate: to the righteous as well as the wicked, the good and the bad,[2] the clean and the unclean, the one who sacrifices and the one who does not sacrifice, the good and the sinner, the one who swears an oath and the one who avoids making an oath.

Such a fate, of course, is death. מקרה is an important term in Koheleth, since the sage pictures a world in which all things have been determined by the inscrutable deity. Since death has been determined to be the fate for every man, it makes no difference, in the final analysis, whether one's actions and behavior are righteous, good, cultically correct, or not. In this series of contrasts

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[1] Reading הבל for MT הכל.

[2] Adding with the major versions, with the exception of the Targum, ולרע.

Koheleth refers to the טמא and the טהור. In P these are terms used to classify people who are ritually or ethically pure or stained. Such a decision was made to determine what, if any, ritual had to be observed before participating in the sacred sphere (see Lev. 10:10f.). Thus, with respect to one's final fate it matters not whether one has been considered ritually and ethically pure or whether one has offered sacrifices. However, Koheleth never suggests ethical behavior and cultic observations should be abandoned. But what Koheleth observes simply is that death comes to all men regardless of their character, and this is the greatest tragedy, the worst 'vanity' of all.

Sirach

Introduction. In the rather prodigious sapiential composition of Sirach, we are confronted by an extensive amount of material concerning cult, demonstrating the absorbing interest of this Palestinian sage in the cultic institutions and practices existing during the Hellenistic period of Jewish history.

While it may well be that Sirach's considerable literary activity spanned a long period of his life,[1] the final product appears to have been finished sometime between 190 and 175 B.C., a date based on the Prologue written by his grandson which states that he carried his illustrious ancestor's writing with him when he emigrated to

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[1] Scott, Wisdom in Israel, p. 202.

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Alexandria during the 38th year of King Euergetes, most certainly Ptolemy VII, thus placing the date of the emigration to Alexandria in 132 B.C. Furthermore, Sirach's eulogy to Simon II, the High Priest who died around 190 B.C., intimates that the heroic figure had recently died, and had been replaced by his legitimate successor, Onias III. In addition, Sirach's obvious concern for the continuance of Onias in his office indicates that the sage was aware of the difficulty the high priest was having, though he demonstrates no awareness of the removal of Onias shortly after the ascension to the throne of Antiochus IV who replaced him with his Hellenizing brother, Jason. Nor does Sirach's writing give any indication of the severe persecution of the Jews undertaken by the same Antiochus IV.[1]

Sirach appears to have been a wisdom teacher in a sapiential school in Jerusalem (ישבה, בית המדרש; 51:23, 29), and possibly was a member of the γραμματετεῖς τοῦ ἱεροῦ mentioned in one of the royal decrees of Antiochus III (Ant. XII, 138f.).[2] His laudative

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[1] Martin Hengel, Judentum und Hellenismus, WUNT, X (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck, 1969), 241. The textual problems posed by Sirach, especially as concern the textual traditions, are perhaps the most complicated in textual-critical research, but due to the general verification of the Mss. of the Cairo Geniza by the Hebrew fragments from Qumran and Masada (e.g., see Yigael Yadin, The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada (Jerusalem: IES, 1965), p. 1) we have decided to follow the Hebrew text of Moshe Segal, Sepher Ben Sira Ha-Shalem, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: The Bialik Foundation, 1958). For extensive analyses of the texual traditions and problems, see Alexander Di Lella, The Hebrew Text of Sirach (London: Mouton and Co., 1966); and H. P. Rüger, Text und Textform im hebräischen Sirach, BZAW, CIX (Berlin: Walther de Gruyter, 1970).

[2] Hengel suggests that he may have held an important position as a judge or counsellor, or perhaps was even a member of the Gerousia (op. cit.).

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description of the positions and functions of the sage in 39:1-11 could very well be based on his own scribal career. It is especially in Sirach that we are able to note the development of the sage from a royal functionary to a scribe of Torah, a process noticeable in Ezra some two centuries earlier, and, what is more, the high-minded savant even considers himself to be an heir of the prophetic role![1]

The Identification of Wisdom with Cult. In determining Sirach's informative attitudes concerning cult, we should first consider the hymnic Aretalogy of hypostatized wisdom in chapter 24.[2] In this most important composition, wisdom is hypostatized as a member of the divine court of the Most High, and in her cosmological function is presented as coming forth from the mouth of God during creation in order to permeate the expanse of the created cosmos. Furthermore, she was appointed as the ruler (משלתי) over every people and nation, though in her search to find a permanent resting place, she took up her abode in Israel, a point illustrating in good fashion Sirach's obeisance to Heilsgeschichte. But even more striking for our concerns is Sirach's identification of cosmological wisdom with the Israelite cult.

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[1] Hengel's comment supports this point when he states concerning the scribe as represented by Sirach: "Der 'Weisheitslehrer' wird zum 'Schriftgelehrten,' indem er seine Wirksamkeit mehr und mehr auf die heiligen Schriften Israels konzentriert " (Ibid., p. 247). Also see J. Marböck, Weisheit im Wandel, BBB, XXXVII (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1971), 83.

[2] For an excellent analysis of this hymnic aretalogy, see Marböck, op. cit., pp. 41f. Marböck points to the significance of the passage with respect to wisdom and cult when he observes: "Wenn

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In the holy tent I served before him,
And subsequently in Zion I was established.
In the beloved city likewise I took my rest,
And in Jerusalem was my dominion.
So I took root among an honored people,
In the portion of Yahweh, his inheritance.

In this most important section of the Aretalogy, the process of the nationalization of cosmological wisdom is most noticeable,[1] but, what is more, the process of nationalization is part and parcel of the Israelite cultus, demonstrating in this manner Israel's special claim to and intimate relation with true, divine wisdom, in contrast to the claim of other nations, especially the Hellenists.[2] In pursuing an investigation of chapter 24, it is interesting to take cognizance of Sirach's portrayal of wisdom's thriving in Israel, for included is a metaphorical depiction of wisdom's emitting of the aroma of spices and fragrances used in the incense of the incense altar as well as in the holy oil used to anoint the tabernacle, ark, various

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als Ben Sira die Sophia in 24, 10 als Liturgin darstellt, wird damit der Kult Israels als ein Höhepunkt der Weisheit bezeichnet, die im Dienst vor Gott zu ihrer Vollendung kommt." (p. 65). A comparable text is found in 4:11-19, especially vv. 13-14 which states that those who serve the temple serve wisdom.

[1] See Rylaarsdam, Revelation in Jewish Wisdom Literature, pp. 18f.

[2] Sirach is at odds with both the Hellenists and especially Hellenizing Jews who are denigrating the rich religious heritage of ancient Israel, though Hellenistic influence on Sirach is noticeable in a number of places (see J. L. Crenshaw, "The Problem of Theodicy in Sirach: On human Bondage," JBL, XCIV [1975], 57). In claiming for wisdom a divine origin, and more specifically an origin with the Jewish deity, he opposes the affirmation that philosophy derives from the Greek philosophers (cf. Alexander Di Lella, "Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom," CBQ, XXVIII [1966], 141).

cultic paraphernalia, and the priests.[1] Such an identification of wisdom with cultus is derived from the sage's investigation of Torah which he also identifies with wisdom: "All of these are the book of the covenant of God Most High, the Torah which Moses commanded us." (v. 24). This identification of wisdom with cult and torah provides us with the basis for our understanding of Sirach's intimate involvement in and devotion to Israel's cultic institutions and practices.

Cultic Orders in "The Praise of the Fathers." In Sirach's panegyrical hymn to the "pious" (חסדים) heroes of Israel's past, an apologetic effort to emphasize the illustrious men of Israelite tradition over against the attractive forces of Hellenism, Sirach is most concerned with illustrating Israel's unique claim to wisdom, which he does by stressing the covenants of the Davidic dynasty, the Aaronic priesthood, and the Zaodokite high priesthood, and the importance of the Israelite cultus, emphases resulting from his efforts to defend Israelite religious faith and tradition during the precarious times of the late third and early second centuries.[2]

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[1] Cinnamon, calamus, and myrrh were ingredients in the anointing oil (Ex. 30:23), while gulbanum, onycha, stacte, and frankincense were ingredients of incense (Ex. 30:34). See Marböck, *op. cit.*, p. 74f. He observes from this that "die Gottesdienst Israels ist demnach kostbare Weisheit..."

[2] E. Janssen remarks: "Die besondere Gabe, die das Volk erhält, ist nicht das Land, sondern das Gesetz und vor allem der Kult. Das wird an der Darstellung Aarons deutlich werden." (*Das Gottesvolk und seine Geschichte* (Neukirchener Verlag, 1971), p. 20). For important studies of the "Praise of the Fathers," consult Edmond Jacob, "L'histoire d'Israel vue par Sira," *Mélanges Bibliques André Robert* (Paris: Bloud and Gay, 1957), pp. 288-94; and Robert T. Siebeneck, "May their Bones return to Life! Sirach's Praise of the

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In a perusal of this eulogy, Sirach may be seen most certainly as a loyalist to the priestly institution of the post-exilic cult, and especially to the office of the high priest.[1] The panegyric to Aaron in 45:6-22 demonstrates his devoted loyalty to the Aaronic priesthood, and this devotion is apparent even more when it is realized that Aaron's eulogy is three times as long as that given to Moses. According to this eulogy, Aaron was singled out "from among all living" and from the tribe of Levi in order to possess the priestly prerogative in the Israelite cultus, a privilege formally sealed according to Sirach in a legal statute valid for all times (חק עולם). Following a description of the magnificent apparel of Aaron, based on the P material in Ex. 28, Sirach underlines the tradition that only Aaron and his descendants possess the right to wear such clothing, and, concomitantly, to possess the priestly office. And indicating his concern for the continuation of cult, Sirach interjects that their tâmîd offering should continue to be made. The tâmîd was the offering of the burnt sacrifices twice each day (see Ex. 29:38-42; Num. 28:2-8; and Lev. 6:2-8).[2] In reaffirming

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Fathers," CBQ, XXI (1959), 411-28. One should also compare this hymn to the Egyptian "In Praise of Learned Scribes."

[1] See Aelred Cody, A History of Old Testament Priesthood, AnBibl, XXXV (Rome: The Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 194f. For an excellent traditio-historical analysis of priesthood, see A. H. J. Gunneweg, Leviten und Priester, FRLANT, LXXXIX (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1965).

[2] Sirach's admonition to the priests to continue faithfully their cultic service receives greater poignancy when seen in the clash with Hellenism, and especially when the temple priests under Jason were reported by the author of II Maccabees to be negligent and even disdainful of their cultic duties (II Macc. 4:13f.).

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the authority of the Aaronic priesthood, Sirach points to the ordination of Aaron by Moses, thus aligning the authority of Moses with the "sons of Aaron." Sirach follows this by indicating that the ordaining of Aaron was authoritatively perpetuated by "an everlasting covenant" (ברית עולם) which extended to his descendants as well, affirming that only they are "to minister to the Lord and to serve as priests and to bless his people in his name" (v. 15). The specific priestly functions of the Aaronic priesthood outlined by the sage include the aforementioned blessing and *tâmîdh* offering, sacrifice, incense as a "memorial portion" (אזכרה), offerings intended to make atonement (לכפר) for the people, and the instruction of priestly testimonies and statutes (מצות חק ומשפט) of the Torah. Once again the sage defends the privilege of the Aaronides against any challengers to their office, by referring to the rebellion of Dathan, Abiram, and Korah. The rebellion of Korah is presented in P as a challenge to the priestly privilege of the Aaronides by the leader of the Levites, "outsiders," who were consumed by the wrath of the Lord, proving again the Lord's support of the Aaronic claim to the priestly office (Num. 16-18). Sirach concludes by underscoring the priestly right to support by the people by means of first fruits and sacrifices, adding that the priests have no "inheritance" (נחלה) or "portion" (חלק), except in Yahweh himself.[1] The

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[1] See Num. 18:8f. Such is comparable with Sirach's teaching in 7:29-31 where he emphasizes that the priesthood should be supported by means of the offerings of the people. In this instruction he gives evidence of a social concern for the priests, since the admonitions concerning the priests are followed by a

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panegyric to Aaron not only demonstrates Sirach's loyal support of the priesthood and his concern that the priesthood continue to perform it's important cultic duties (v. 14), but also demonstrates his desire to defend the exclusive claim of the "sons of Aaron" against encroachment of other groups, especially non-Aaronic Levitical families whose wish to function as full-fledged priests of the altar and not as secondary cultic officials in subjection to the Aaronides is well documented in post-exilic literature.

Sirach's support of the Zadokite right to the office of the high priest is demonstrated in his panegyric to Phinehas, "the son of Eleazar" and "ranked third in greatness." Sirach's extollment of Phinehas is based primarily on Num. 25:10-13 in which Phinehas is given "a covenant of peace" (ברית שלום), interpreted by P as "a covenant of perpetual priesthood" for him and his descendants. Such was given to Phinehas according to P because of his "zealous" action to remove foreigners from the holy congregation by putting to death an Israelite and his Midianite wife. This was considered an act of "atonement" and was done to appease the wrath of God which had

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section dealing with almsgiving for the support of the poor (see Solomon Schechter, "A Glimpse of the Social Life of the Jews in the Age of Jesus the Son of Sirach," Studies in Judaism [Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1908], p. 75). In this passage the "honoring of God" is equated with the "honoring of the priests," and Sirach adds that the giving of offerings for the support of the priests is commanded in the law, providing a second motivation for giving. It may well be that during the difficult economic times following the death of Simon II when heavy taxation, for example, became extremely difficult to pay, and when the leading priestly families had grown rather wealthy, temple offerings had slackened, thus making the gentle prodding of Sirach necessary.

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inflicted a destructive plague upon the people because of the defilement caused by foreign elements. Sirach paraphrases this material from P, but adds that such a covenant included the giving to Phinehas and his descendants the office of "high priesthood" forever (כהונה גדולה עד עולם). The import of this statement by Sirach is that he supported the Zadokite and, more specifically, the Oniad claim to the office of high priest over against other Aaronic families and especially the Tobiads.[1] The Zadokites had controlled the Jerusalem priesthood during the pre-exilic period, and during the exilic and post-exilic periods had begun to trace their lineage back to Phinehas and Eleazar (I Chr. 5:30-34; Ezra 8:2) in their rivalry with another group claiming Aaronic descent through Ithamar. The final solution of this rivalry is indicated by the Chronicler during the third century when all descendants of Aaron finally possessed the legitimate claim to priesthood, though the descendants claiming the Aaronic lineage through Eleazar-Phinehas were in the dominant position. And apparently because Eleazar and Phinehas were seen by P to be the successors of Aaron to the high priest's office, control of this important office was in the hands of the Zadokites. Sirach's obvious concern to support the Zadokite-Oniad privilege should be understood within the tumultuous struggles concerning the office following the death of Simon II whose son became embroiled in political controversy and eventually was removed from office by Antiochus IV and replaced

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[1] See A. Caquot, "Ben Sira et le Messianisme," Semitica, XVI (1966), 66.

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first by Jason, the brother of Onias, and later, following the removal of Jason, by Menelaus, a Tobiad, who outbid Jason for the office.[1]

Following his eulogy to Phinehas, Sirach adds a comparison between the Davidic and the Aaronic covenants:

> And also there is his covenant with David, the son of Jesse of the Tribe of Judah. The heritage of sacrificial fire before his glory is the heritage of Aaron to all his descendants.[2]

Perhaps Sirach's main intent is to stress the authority and claim to perpetuation of the Aaronic covenant by putting it on an equal basis with the Davidic covenant which was "forever." But it is conceivable, since the statement is preceded by material concerning the high priest, that Sirach is intimating that the ideal theocratic rule of the chosen includes the civil rule of the king descended from David and the religious rule of the high priest, and, therefore, suggests that the duties of the priesthood belong in the realm of the cult and not in the pursuing of civil power that had been the case off and on during the post-exilic period, especially during the reign of

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[1] II Macc. 4:1f. For a discussion of the Tobiads, see B. Mazar, "The Tobiads," IEJ, VII (1957), 137-45; 229-38. Another reference to the "Sons of Zadok" and their divine selection for the priesthood occurs in the hymn in 51:12:i-xvi, verse ix, though the siracide authorship of this hymn has been questioned, for example, by Di Lella, since "it is not contained in any of the versions and does not seem to suit the context." If authentic, Di Lella suggests it was probably excised "from most of the MSS of Sir in order to avoid embarassing the Hasmonean high priests" (op. cit., pp. 101-105).

[2] The Syriac and Greek translations read in place of "the heritage of sacrificial fire before his glory": "the inheritance of the king is from son to son," and probably intended to demonstrate that Aaron's covenant is to all of his descendants, whereas the Davidic covenant is intended for only one descendant at a time. The reason for the variance in the reading remains enigmatic.

Simon II, and accordingly led to the embroilment of the sacral office in political turmoil.[1]

Sirach concludes this section relating to the priesthood, by addressing to the priesthood of his day an admonitory blessing:

> And now, bless the good Lord, the One who crowned you in Glory.
> And may he give to you a wise heart in order to judge his people with righteousness,
> In order that your goodness might not be forgotten, and your power might continue throughout all generations (v. 26).[2]

Once again, Sirach assumes his role of teacher, and exhorts the priesthood of his own day to exhibit in their judging of the people wisdom and righteousness that their privilege might always continue.

But certainly the longest and most laudative eulogy is devoted to Simon II, the High Priest who had died shortly before the completion of Sirach's writing (50:1-26), and who represents the climatic conclusion of Sirach's "Praise of the Fathers."[3] The dates

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[1] Segal, op. cit., pp. 316-17. The covenants of David, Aaron, and Phinehas are important to Sirach, since they guarantee the continuation of the central institutions of the poeple, and, therefore, the people themselves as a nation. Yet Sirach is also concerned that the successors to these covenants as well as the people of Judah remain obedient and faithful to their religious heritage (see P. A. H. De Boer, "בבריתם עמד זרעם Sirach xliv 12a," SVT, XVI (1967), 25-29.

[2] This text is directed most probably to the entire priesthood, since the plural verbs and pronouns are used. If singular, then it would have been directed to the reigning high priest as Snaith has suggested (Ecclesiasticus, CBC [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974], p. 227).

[3] Lampartner comments: "Die Art, wie er dessen heiligen Priesterdienst am grossen Versöhunungstag schildert (50, 1-23), zeigt, wie viel ihm selbst der Tempelgottesdienst bedeutet hat." (Die Apokryphen, I [Stuttgart: Calwer, 1972], 11).

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for Simon's rule as high priest are inconclusive, but roughly may be placed between 220 and 190 B.C. Simon's prominence in Sirach's composition results not only from the tremendous power and prestigue of the high priest, but also from the sage's concern to insure the continuity of the Zadokite-Oniad high priesthood which was coming under extreme pressure during the rule of Simon's successor, Onias III, who was removed by Antiochus IV some time after 175 B.C.[1]

Sirach points to the accomplishments of Simon in vv. 1-4 which included the repairing and fortification of the temple and city, the construction of a reservoir, and his saving of the people of Jerusalem during the Ptolemaic-Seleucid war which culminated in the victory of the Seleucids. Such a description of his accomplishments most probably is related to the beneficial decrees of Antiochus III, the victorious Seleucid king, who rewarded the Jews for their support during the war, especially in their aiding his taking of the citadel in Jerusalem.[2] The decree granting a number of favors to the Jews is summarized in a letter from Antiochus III to an offical named Ptolemy and included: the provisions for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the allowing of inhabitants who had fled the city to return, money for temple supplies, tax-free lumber for the repair of the temple, the exemption of the inhabitants of Jerusalem from taxation for three years and thereafter a reduction in taxes by one-third, the exemption of the Gerousia, the priests, the temple scribes, and singers from certain taxes, the freeing of Jewish slaves and prisoners of war and the returning of their property, and, most importantly, the allowing of the Jews to "live according to their ancestral laws."[1] According to Tcherikover, the last item included not only the Law of Moses and various religious traditions, but also the maintenance of political institutions and social organizations. Furthermore, he argues that Antiochus III thus gave royal ratification to the theocracy which included the religious and civil rule of the high priest over Jerusalem and Judea, a ratification probably resulting from Simon's leadership over the Gerousia which went forth to greet the new conqueror they had openly supported.[2]

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[1] For a discussion of the problematic reign of Onias III and his subsequent ouster, see Hengel, op. cit., pp. 16f., 491f.

[2] So argues Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews (New York: Atheneum, 1959), pp. 80f.

Sirach then turns to what appears to be a firsthand account of the role of the High Priest in his most important religious function, presiding over the "Day of Atonement" (5-21), and gives an extended depiction of the radiant glory of the High Priest in his magnificent clothing which made the entire sanctuary shine brilliantly (vv. 5-11).[1] Sirach follows with a description of the liturgy including the attending priests and their functions, the sacrifice, the libation, the sounding of the trumpets for a remembrance, the prayer of the people, the singing of the singers, and the blessing of the high priest for the people which included the uttering of the divine name.[2]

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[1] Ant., XII, 139-41. A second document recorded by Josephus (Ant., XII, 145f.) points to specific examples of the carrying out of the King's decree.

[2] Tcherikover, op. cit., pp. 83f. Thus the Jews were treated, politically speaking, as one of the "nations" within the Seleucid Empire and not as "cities" and "princes." Such a political designation allowed the Jews a good deal of self-autonomy (Ibid., p. 88).

Finally, Sirach concludes his "Praise of the Fathers" with a doxology in which he asks God to grant wisdom and peace to the Jews of his own day, and, most important for our purposes, asks a blessing for Simon and his descendants in the office of high priest:

> May his steadfast love be confirmed for Simon,
> And may he establish for him the covenant of Phinehas.
> So that one will never be cut off from him and his offspring
> All the days of heaven.[3]

Once more we have evidence of Sirach's concern for the continuance of the legitimate succession of the Zadokite-Oniad high priesthood in face of a gathering storm of controversy surrounding this most important office.

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[1] See Josephus, Ant., 172f., for his description of the high priest's apparel.

[2] See Othmar Schilling, Das Buch Jesus Sirach, Herder-B, VII (Freiburg: Herder, 1956), pp. 208f. Lehmann observes that "his description of the yom kippur ritual does not follow the standard order of the service, probably as Ben Sira 50 is primarily intended as a poetic homage to the High Priest and as a description of his personal appearance on this day" ("Ben Sira and the Qumran Literature," RdQ, III [1961], 119.

[3] The Greek version has omitted this specific blessing for Simon and his descendants, probably due to the breaking of the line of Zadokite succession by the time the translation was made.

One other group of cultic personnel mentioned by Sirach is that of the singers. Sirach, obviously following the Chronicler, ascribes the establishment of the guilds of the singers in the temple to David who was himself a singer of psalms of praise to God (47:8f.). As indicated before, he also mentions the singers in the liturgy of the Day of Atonement (50:18). But in contrast to the Chronicler, Sirach appears relatively unconcerned with the levitical singers, probably since he places himself in support of the Aaronic priesthood over against the continued efforts of the levites to assume priestly functions.[1]

Cultic Rituals: Sacrificial Offerings, Ritual Washings, and Fasting. We have already referred to the sacrifices and offerings mentioned by Sirach in his eulogies to Aaron and Phinehas, and Simon. With respect to Sirach's own emphases with regard to the participation of the wise in cultic worship, by far the most important material is contained in his Instruction dealing with the cult in 31:21-32:26 (Gk. 34:18-35:20), which in terms of forms contains admonitions, proverbs, rhetorical questions, and a short didactic poem:

Sacrifice and Oppression

A sacrifice (זבח) of oppression is an evil burnt
offering (עולה),
And the offering (קרבן) of the wicked is not pleasing
(לרצון).

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[1] For a discussion of the Levitical singers in the post-exilic period, see de Vaux, Ancient Israel, II, 394.

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The Lord will not be pleased with the burnt offerings
(עולות) of the wicked,
And transgression is not atoned with many sacrifices (זבחים).
A son who sacrifices (זבח) before his father,
Offers (מוקריב) an offering (קרבן) from the property of
the poor.
The bread of the destitute is the life of the poor;
And one who deprives a worker of his wage, spills his blood.

Worship and True Repentance

One builds and another tears down.
What will they gain when they toil?
One blesses and another curses.
Whose voice will the Lord hear?
One who is purified after touching a dead body and touches
it again,
What will he have gained by his ritual washing (רחיצה)?
Thus, a man fasts (צם) for his sins,
And once more goes and commits the same sins.
Who will hear his prayer (תפלה),
And what will he have gained for having humbled himself?

Sacrifice Equated with Righteous Living

He who keeps the Law (תורה) offers many offerings (קרבן).
He who sacrifices peace offerings (שלמים) heeds the
commandment (מצוה).
He who does kindness, offers fine flour (סלת),
And he who establishes righteousness, sacrifices (זבח) a
thank offering (תודה).
To turn from evil is pleasing (רצון) to the Lord,
And forgiveness is to turn from unrighteousness.

Sacrifice and the Fulfillment of Torah

Do not appear before the Lord empty-handed,
Because all these things are on account of the commandment
(מצוה).

The Sacrifice of the Righteous

The offering (קרבן) of the righteous anoints the altar,
And it is a pleasing odor (ריח ניחוח) before the Lord.
The cereal offering (מנחה) of a righteous man is pleasing
(תרצה),

And its remembrance (אזכרה) will not be forgotten.

Worship and the Cheerful Giver

Glorify the Lord with a bountiful heart,
And do not diminish the offering of your hand (תרומת יד).
In all your deeds make your face cheerful,
And with joy devote the tithe (מעשר).
Give to him according to his gifts to you,
With a bountiful heart and according to your ability.
Because God is one who repays;
Seven-fold he will return to you.

Worship and Oppression

Do not offer a bribe because he will not accept it,
And do not trust in a sacrifice (זבח) of oppression.
Because he is the God of justice,
And he does not show partiality.
He will not show partiality with respect to a poor man,
But the supplication (ותחנוני) of a distressed man he will
hear.
He will not abandon the cry (צעקה) of an orphan,
Nor the widow when she increases her complaint.
Do not the tears run down her cheek,
As she bewails those who made them fall?
An acceptable plaint will receive respite,
And a cry (צעקה) is a cloud of solitude.[1]

In this extended instruction concerning cult, it is quite apparent that Sirach is most conversant with the different types of sacrificial offerings: זבח, עולה, קרבן, שלמים, תודה, סלת, מנחה, תרומת יד and אזכרה. In addition he refers to prayer (תפלה, תחנון, צעקה), fasting (צום), ablution (רחיצה), and the tithe (מעשר). But even more important for our concerns are his usages of cultic language in speaking of acceptable or unacceptable worship, the social concerns he expresses for the poor and the oppressed, his emphasis upon the intent of the worshippers, and finally his comments that one should be observant, cultically speaking, because of such being in the Torah, and that righteous conduct is equal to ritual observance.

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[1] A short didactic poem pertaining to prayer follows in 32:21-26.

First of all, Sirach utilizes the language of the cult when he assesses whether or not a cultic observance is acceptable to the Lord. The technical cultic terms for "pleasing" and "not pleasing" (לרצון, לא לרצון) are found in 31:22, 23; 32:5, 9 . This coupled with Sirach's acquaintance with the major types of sacrifices demonstrate the sage is well acquainted with cultic language and terminology.

Even more important for our investigation is the evident concern Sirach possesses for the poor and oppressed which is connected with whether or not cultic offerings are acceptable. If an offering is made at the expense of the poor and oppressed, then it is declared unacceptable to the deity (31:21, 22, 24, 27; 32:15). Furthermore Yahweh is depicted as a righteous judge who cannot be bribed with sacrifices offered by powerful oppressors (32:14f.). Rather he is seen as the champion of the oppressed who, upon hearing their cry of distress, will rouse himself forth to destroy the wicked. Such a concern for the poor and oppressed is found throughout this sapiential composition, and certainly points to Sirach's defense of the poor and oppressed against the powerful aristocracy, including both Jews and the foreign ruling class (see 32:23).[1]

In like fashion to his sapiential ancestors, Sirach also demonstrates an obvious concern with the character of the worshipper, since worship offered by the wicked is valueless, unacceptable to Yahweh (31:21-22), whereas the offering of the "righteous anoints the altar, and is a pleasing odor before the Lord" (32:8).[2] Also in this regard Sirach lambasts the cultic participation of the sinner who, having participated in rituals such as fasting or ablutions (31:30-31), immediately commits the same sinful action for which he had sought forgiveness.

The motivations pointed to by Sirach for involvement in cultic worship include the simple answer that such is commanded in the Law, the principle of retribution (he who gives to the Lord will be rewarded many times over the price of his offering), and the desire to achieve forgiveness (atonement) for one's sins, and thus to become "pleasing" to the deity.

Finally, the most striking is Sirach's equating righteous behavior with cultic devotion, since both achieve the same end: forgiveness and acceptance by the deity (33:1-3). Such should not be interpreted to mean that Sirach exalts righteous actions over cultic participation, but rather places them both on an equal plane in his depiction of sapiential peity. The true wise man, therefore, is righteous and cultically observant, and to distinguish between the two is a dichotomy completely foreign to Sirach's understanding.[1]

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[1] Haspecker argues that Sirach is primarily concerned with the social and ethical ramifications of cult in this instruction (Gottesfurcht bei Jesus Sirach, AnBibl, XXX (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968), 178).

[2] "Weiter, die Zeremonie hat nur dann einer Wert, wenn sie sich mit sittlicher Gesinnung verbindet" (Paul Volz, Weisheit, SAT,

Cultic Rituals: Prayer and the Lament-Thanksgiving Cycle. As was apparent in the cultic sensitivites of the traditional wise in Job and Proverbs, prayer appears as the primary cultic act, and especially prayer in terms of the lament-thanksgiving cycle. And Sirach is no exception to this general observation, for the second century sage not only mentions prayer in numerous places, but even includes several of his own complete prayers in his final composition (22:27-23:1-4; 36:1-17; and 51:1-12).

In his praiseworthy description of the ideal wise man in 39:1f., Sirach accentuates prayer as the chief cultic action of the wise (יעתיר, תפלה, יתחנן). The wise man offers prayer to God for his sins (cf. 21:1), an important part of the penitential lament, and then, depending upon whether the prayer is accepted by the deity (ירצה), the wise man will be filled with the "spirit of insight," (רוח בינה), which will enable him to "pour forth words of wisdom," and "he will give thanks (ויודה) to the Lord in prayer, or in other words, will offer a thanksgiving psalm for God's reception of

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II [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1911] , 212).

[1] Robert H. Pfeiffer, A History of New Testament Times (New York: Harper and Row, 1949), p. 375.

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his lament. A number of points should be noted in this passage. First, the true wise man is one who participates in prayer, the primary cultic act of the pious wise which is probably related to the ability of the wise to speak well and to the fact that the genres of prayer were most probably learned in wisdom circles.[1] Second, Sirach, when he speaks of prayer, as is the case here, is generally referring to the lament-thanksgiving cycle. Finally, the passage refers to the "prayer for wisdom," another type of prayer appearing in sapiential literature (cf. Wis. of Solomon 9 [cf. I Kgs. 3] and Sir. 37:15; 51:13-14 and 19).

It is evident from Sirach's numerous references to prayer that he is intimately concerned with the character of the one who prays, and places serious stress upon obedience to Torah. If one is obedient to Torah, his prayer will be answered (3:5). In addition, Sirach teaches that one who is not forgiving should not expect to have his prayer accepted and his own sins forgiven (28:1f.). The prayers of the poor and oppressed receive, according to Sirach, special consideration by the deity, underlining the social and historical circumstances in which Sirach lived. And Sirach disdains the meaningless repetition of prayer formulae as uncharacteristic of sapiential behavior (7:14).

In a brief Instruction concerning prayer, specifically in terms of the lament and thanksgiving, Sirach admonishes his pupils:

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[1] See 44:5 in the context of the "Praise of the Fathers" which speaks of the wisdom of the fathers and adds that they "investigated psalms (מזמור) according to their rules, and put

> Turn to the Lord and abandon iniquities.
> Make entreaty (והתחנן) before him and diminish the cause
>   of stumbling.
> Who is able to praise the Lord in Sheol,
> In place of the living, who give forth praise?
> Thanksgiving (תודה) ceases for the dead as for one who
>   never existed.
> The one who is alive and well will praise (ידה) the Lord.

The point of the Instruction is that the sinner should engage in a penitential lament before he dies, for Sirach grimly reminds his audience that it is impossible to utter a thanksgiving for divine deliverance, once one has descended to the depths of the underworld.

One of the most intriguing sections concerning prayer, especially as regards the lament, is found in chapter 38 which seeks a solution to a new problem posed by the presence of the Hellenistic physician.[1] Does the pious Jew seek out the physician, or does he forego a consultation and depend solely upon divine healing from Yahweh, the divine physician? Sirach seeks a middle ground in this dispute and counsels his audience to consult a physician when ill, since, Sirach suggests, God has created the physician, his profession, and the medicine which he dispenses, and thus the physician has his divinely appointed place and function in the order of reality.[2] Furthermore, the pious physician will pray to the deity for aid in

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parables into writing."

[1] For a discussion of chapter 38, see Marböck, op. cit., pp. 160f.; and Haspecker, op. cit., p. 190.

[2] The Chronicler believed that such a consultation of the physician was a lack of faith in the divine healer (II Chron. 16:12).

making the correct diagnosis and for the divine healing of his patient. Thus, God is seen as one who acts to heal the sick through means of the Hellenistic physician! Even so, Sirach does not discard the ancient, religious convention of the lament ritual, for the sick are also counseled to offer a lament to the deity for healing. Accompanied by the confession of sins and an offering of the proper sacrifice (ניחוח אזכרה) along with an offering of oil (v. 11). Thus Hellenistic science and Israelite faith are entwined by Sirach.

As mentioned previously, Sirach has included three rather lengthy prayers of his own in the final composition: 22:27-23:4 ("A Prayer for Self-Control"); 33:1-13; 36:16-22 (Eng. 36:1-17; "A Lament for the Deliverance of the Nation"); and 51:1-12 ("An Individual Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Sin and Death").[1] The first prayer, "A Prayer for Self-Control," embraces the desire of the wise man to become the ideal "silent man" by mastery of his passions and especially his tongue:

> Oh that he would place a guard over my mouth,
> And a seal of prudence upon my lips,
> Lest I fall because of them and my tongue destroy me.
> God, my father and Lord of my life,
> Do not allow me to fall on account of them.
> Oh that they would put a whip to my thoughts,
> And a rod of discipline to my mind,
> That they might not pardon my iniquities,
> And pass over my transgressions.
> That my iniquity might not be multiplied,
> And my transgressions increased,
> Lest I fall before one who hates me,

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[1] Of course, it is possible that Sirach has included borrowed prayers, and has not composed them himself, though we tend towards the conclusion that he was the original author.

And my enemy rejoice over me.
Oh God my father and Lord of my life,
Do not abandon me to their counsel.
Do not give me precipitant eyes,
And keep far from me a wanton heart.
Do not allow lustful flesh to entice me,
And do not allow an impudent soul to rule over me.

The second prayer, "A Lament for the Deliverance of the Nation" (33:1-13; 36:16-22), is a communal lament set most probably against the background of a Judah ruled by the Greeks, and, placed on the lips of Sirach, would reflect the sapiential emphasis of the efficacious intercession of the righteous, wise man who hopes to persuade the deity to restore his nation to former prominence.[1]

Save us Oh God of all
And place the fear of you over all the nations.
Move against a foreign nation,
So that they may see your mighty deeds.
As you have been sanctified by means of us before them,
So exalt youself by means of us before our eyes.
So that they may know what we have known,
That there is no God besides you.
Renew a sign, and repeat a miracle.
Make glorious your hand and strengthen your strong right hand.
Arouse your anger and pour out your wrath.
Subdue the adversary, and drive out the enemy.
Hasten the end time and enjoin the appointed time.
For who says to you, "What are you doing?"
In burning anger let the survivor be consumed,
And let those who oppress your people find destruction.
Smite the head of the temples of Moab,
The one who says, "There is no one but me."
Gather all the tribes of Jacob,
And let them inherit once again as in former days.
Have mercy upon the people called by your name,
Israel whom you have entitled 'first-born'.
Have mercy for your holy city,
Jerusalem the place of your rest.

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[1] For an analysis of such prayers, see E. J. Bickerman, "The Civic Prayer for Jerusalem," HThR, LV (1962), 163-95.

Fill Zion with your splendor,
And your sanctuary with your glory.
Give testimony to your deeds at the beginning,
And establish the prophecy spoken in your name.
Give a reward to those who await you,
And let your prophets be trustworthy.
You will hear the prayer (תפלה) of your servants,
According to your delight for your people.
So that all the ends of the earth may know,
That you are the God of the world.

Again notation should be made of the identification of the communal lament with 'prayer' (תפלה).[1]

The third prayer, "An Individual Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Sin and Death," is placed near the end of the final composition (51:1-12). Its authenticity has been disputed by some, but without convincing evidence.[2] The form is a typical Individual Thanksgiving, and presents Sirach's prayer of Thanksgiving to the deity for delivering him from the destructive forces of sin and death.

I will praise you, Oh God of my salvation.
I will thank (אודך) you, Oh God of my father.
I will tell of your name, Oh refuge of my life,
Because you have redeemed my soul from death.
You have spared my flesh from the pit,
And from Sheol you have delivered my soul.
You have set me free from the defamation of people,
From the scourge of the evil report of foreigners,
From lips of rebellious lies.
Before those who stood by, you were my helper,
According to your abundant steadfast love.

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[1] Cf. Sirach's references in the "Praise of the Fathers" to Samuel's successful intercession for deliverance from the Philistines (46:13f.), and to those made by the people during the time of Hezekiah for deliverance from Sennacherib (48:17f.). These texts intimate Sirach's faith that God will once again act on behalf of his troubled people.

[2] For a defense of the siracide authorship of this psalm, see Heinrich Germann, "Jesus ben Siras Dankgebet und die Hodajoyth," ThZ, XIX (1963), 81-87.

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You have delivered me from the snare of the watchman of the precipice,
From the hand of those seeking my life,
From many sorrows;
From the straits of destructive flames which had surrounded me,
From a flaming fire which burned out of control,
From the deep womb of my mother,
From deceitful lips, and those who were foolish liars,
And from the arrows of a deceitful tongue.
For my soul had drawn near to death,
And my life to Sheol below.
And I turned, but there was no one to help me.
And I looked about for someone to sustain me, but there was no one.
Then I remembered the mercy of my Lord,
And his eternal steadfast love,
The one who delivers those who trust in him,
And the one who redeems from every evil.
Then I raised my voice from the earth,
And I cried out from the gates of Sheol.
And I exalted my Lord, you my father,
Because you are the mighty one of my salvation.
Do not abandon me on the day of sorrow,
On the day of devastation and desolation.
I will praise your name continually,
And I will remember you in prayer (תְּפִלָּה).
Then the Lord heard my voice,
And he gave ear to my entreaty.
He redeemed me from every evil,
And he delivered me on the day of sorrow.
On account of that I will give thanks (הוֹדִיתִי), and I will praise,
And I will bless the name of the Lord.

Once more the obvious equation between this thanksgiving psalm and prayer is made, and demonstrates the cogency of the position we have argued, that the wise were involved in the writing of psalmodic prayers, a point that will be of primary concern in the following chapter.

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Didactic Hymns.[1] In addition to laments and thanksgivings, hymns also appear in the repertoire of Sirach's literary accomplishments: 1:1f., 4:11-19, 24:1-29 (hymns concerning wisdom); 16:24-17:14, 39:12-35, and 42:15-43:33 (Creation Hymns).[2] That the wise of Sirach's day participated creatively in the writing of hymns may be concluded from his statement in 15:9-10:

> A hymn of praise is not fitting in the mouth of a wicked man,
> Because it has not been accorded to him by God.
> Rather a hymn should be uttered by the mouth of a wise man;
> And the one who masters it, will teach it.

Thus Sirach attaches divine inspiration to the production of hymns by the wise, since to Sirach, the subsequent ability to write hymns is a gift from the deity. Furthermore, Sirach testifies to the usage of the hymn by the wise in instruction, probably meaning that the genre of the hymn as well as certain didactic hymns were taught to their pupils. The best example of a didactic hymn written by Sirach is a beautifully structured creation hymn placed in 39:12-35.

	Introductions
Sapiential Introduction	Again I have reflected, and I shall speak, And like the fullmoon, I have become full. Listen to me, Oh innocent ones, and sprout forth Like a rose planted by streams of water. And send forth fragrance like frankincense, And like a lily send forth blossoms.

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[1] For an analysis of this and other forms in Sirach, see W. Baumgartner, "Die literarischen Gattungen in der Weisheit des Jesus Sirach," ZAW, XXXIV (1914), 161-98.

[2] Also see the Hebrew hymn following 51:12.

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Hymnic Introduction

Give forth your voice and sing praise,
And bless the Lord for all his deeds.
Ascribe greatness to his name,
And praise him in a hymn of praise (תהלה).
In songs accompanied by the lyre and stringed instruments,
And then shall you say with a shout:

Proverbial Thesis

Every deed of God is good,
And every need (צורך) will be supplied in its time (עת).

Strophe I

A

God as Creator and Savior

According to his command he arranged in order the heap of waters,
And at the utterance of his mouth its reservoir.
Its lowest regions he passes through according to his desire,
Even as no restraint is placed on his salvation.

B

Retribution: God as Savior of the Just

The activity of every one is before him,
And nothing is hidden from his eyes.
From everlasting to everlasting he observes;
Is there any number to his salvation?
There is nothing too small and insignificant for him,
And there is nothing more marvelous and strong than he.

Disputative Refrain: Thesis Restated

Do not say, "What is this for"? Because everything has been selected for its need (צורך).
Do not say, "This is worse than that." Because everything will be powerful in its time (עת).

Strophe II

B^1

Retribution: God

His blessings overflow like the Nile,

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as Destroyer of the Foreigners

And like a river drenches the dry land.
Thus the nations will inherit his rage,
As he turns fresh water into salt.
His paths are straight to the upright,
Just as they are crooked to the foreigners.

1. Explanatory Expansion of B^1

Creation of Good Things

Good things were apportioned to the good
from the beginning,
As both good and evil were to the evil.
Basic for every need (צורך) of a man's
life are
Water and fire, iron and salt,
Wheat flour, milk, and honey,
Wine, oil, and clothing.
All these are good for the good,
Yet they are turned to evil for the wicked.

2. Explanatory Expansion of B^1

Creation of Evil Things

There are winds which have been formed for
judgment.
And in their wrath they move mountains,
And at the time (עת) of consummation
they will pour out their power,
As they soothe the spirit of their creator.
Fire and hail, calamity and pestilence,
These also have been formed for judgment.
The teeth of the wild beast, the scorpion,
the venomous serpent,
And the sword of vengeance to destroy the
wicked.

A^1

God as Creator of Destruction

All these things have been created for
their function (צורך).
And they will be mustered in the storehouse,
and at the proper time (עת),
They will leap forth when he commands them.
And according to their statute, they will
not rebel against his word.

Conclusions

Sapiential Conclusion

Therefore from the beginning I have taken
counsel,
And I have reflected and in writing have
deposited it.

Proverbial Thesis	Every deed of God is good, And every need (צורך) will be supplied in its time (עת).
Disputative Refrain: Thesis Restated	Do not say, "This is worse than that". Because all will become powerful in its time (עת).
Hymnic Conclusion	Now with all your heart give forth praise, And bless the name of the Holy One.

The structure of this didactic hymn is the artistic work of a master craftsman. Following two 6 hemistich introductions, a sapiential and a hymnic one in following the nature of the didactic hymn, Sirach states the thesis over which he is reflecting in his hymn in the form of a proverb: "Every deed of God is good, and every need will be supplied in its time." The body of the didactic hymn consists of two strophes, consisting of two major parts: A, B and B^1, A^1 which are in chiastic arrangement and demonstrate external antithetical parallelism. A and A^1 each have four hemistichs, while B and B^1 each have 6 hemistichs. Strophe II contains two explanatory expansions, each possessing 8 hemistichs, and demonstrating external antithetical parallelism. Strophe I and Strophe II both are concluded by a refrain which is disputative in form,[1] and the content effectively restates the proverbial thesis: "Do not say, 'What is this for?' Because everything has been selected for its need (צורך);" and "Do not say, 'This is worse than that.' Because everything will be powerful in its time (עת)." Note that the major key words, צורך and עת are repeated in this two-part refrain. Finally, in

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[1] For a discussion of the 'disputation' in Sirach, see Crenshaw, "The Problem of Theodicy in Sirach," pp. 50f.

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the conclusions, both a sapiential and a hymnic conclusion are presented, paralleling the two-fold introduction, and the proverbial thesis is stated once more: "Every deed of God is good and every need (צורך) will be supplied in its time (עת). The key words placed in strategic positions throughout the didactic hymn are צורך ("need," "function") and עת ("time"), and occur in the proverbial thesis, stressing Sirach's major point that every part of creation has its proper place, function, and time for existence within the created order. Sirach reflects over this proverb, and uses it in his attempts at validating the justice of God[1] which had been maligned especially by Koheleth and probably by certain opponents of his own period.[2] Thus he argues all things are good, and frees the deity of complicity in evil by stating that good things have been mercifully supplied for the righteous, whereas the evil, though they may at times enjoy the same blessings of good, eventually will see them turn to evil. Furthermore, even evil things which God has created have a just and good purpose, and that is, they are constructed as tools of judgment, sent by God to punish and destroy the wicked at the proper time. This is their function (צורך), and God determines the time (עת) for them to work their mission of destruction against the wicked. Thus he disputes his opponents who question why an apparently evil thing exists or who dare to call one element of creation worse than another. But most important for our concerns, besides the obvious point that the wise wrote didactic hymns, is the manner in which the hymn has been conceived and constructed by our sage. He has taken a simple proverb, reflected upon it (see v. 32), and has built his didactic hymn around it. Such should provide us with the key to unlock the mysteries of wisdom psalms in the coming chapter.

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[1] For an analysis of this and other hymns in Sirach, especially as pertains to the problem of theodicy, see Crenshaw, op. cit., pp. 51f.

[2] As noted in our discussion of Koheleth, this sage had argued that the activity of the deity was beyond human scrutiny, and, therefore, sapiential understanding (3:11, 8:17). And the cold and

The Vow. Sirach also includes among his writings concerning the cult a short instruction pertaining to the vow in which he alludes to the extreme seriousness of the obligation to which one binds himself in the vow making procedure.

> Do not withhold from paying your vow (נדר).
> And do not wait until you are dead to be justified.
> Before you vow, give serious consideration to your vow,
> And do not be one who tempts his Lord (18:22-23).

Sirach concludes his teaching with respect to the vow in the context of careless and rash speech, and, like his sapiential predecessors, regards hasty vows to be the result of foolishness. He discredits the fool who makes a vow before seriously considering its consequences. In addition, he is most concerned that his wise pupils fulfill their vow once it is made, intimating that destruction comes to those who foolishly linger in paying it.[1] Sirach disdains the effort to use

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hostile world gave no support to the idea of retribution, which Koheleth was forced to denounce.

[1] See Koh. 5:3f., and Prov. 20:25.

the vow as a bargaining process in which one hopes to seduce the deity into fulfilling one's request by making an enticing bargain.

Urim and Thummim. Sirach places the sacred lots back in the hands of the priests, indicating that they are in use in his day, and also places their oracle-obtaining power in high esteem (see 45:10, and 33:3, Grk.). He states:

> A man of understanding will trust in the law;
> For him the law is as dependable
> As an enquiry by means of Urim.

Holy Times. Besides the lengthy description of the most important fast day in the Israelite calendar, the Day of Atonement, Sirach also refers to holy seasons in two other important places. In his eulogy pertaining to David, he praises the august king for "giving glory to the pilgrimmage festivals (חגים)," and for "arranging in order the appointed times (מועדים).[1] Perhaps this reflects David's making Jerusalem the central sanctuary where pilgrimmage would be made for the major festivals (47:10). Secondly, Sirach speaks of holy times in a rather intriguing section which deals with the contrasts of opposites which are present in reality: good and evil, life and death, the sinner and the pious man, and the blessed and the cursed (36:7-15). Sirach's explanation for the existence of sacral seasons is given in response to the question:

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[1] מועדים "must...have had a rather wide meaning, and it seems to have been used for all kinds of religious assemblies. The word חג, on the other hand, was reserved for the three great feasts of pilgrimage " (de Vaux, Ancient Israel, II, 470).

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"Why is one day deemed better than another when all the daylight in the year is from the same source, the sun?" Sirach's response, which demonstrates the serious reflection of the sage, is that distinctions between holy times and ordinary days were made by the wise Lord. Certain days he made "festival times" (מועדים), and "blessed and hallowed" them, whereas some days were made to be ordinary calendrical days (literally, "days for counting"). Using this as his base, Sirach moves on to explain the divinely appointed opposites elsewhere in reality, and especially the divinely determined behavior and lot of all men.[1]

The Temple. Sirach's devotion to the temple is obvious. We have already pointed to his placing of wisdom in the "holy tabernacle" (משכן קדש), to his references to the service in the temple by the high priests in 45:24 and 50:5, and to the singers in the temple organized by David (47:13). Sirach also praises the Judean kings in their various roles with respect to the building and reforming of the temple and its cultus. An allusion is made to Josiah's reformation of the cultus in the Jerusalem temple (49:2), and Zerubbabel and Joshua are praised for their efforts in the rebuilding of the temple (49:11-12). In two places (33:18, 49:6) Jerusalem is referred to as the "city of the sanctuary (קרית קדש), the first of which is found in the "Lament for the Deliverance of the Nation." In this prayer,

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[1] Von Rad, Wisdom in Israel, p. 267. For his cogent analysis of 'time' in Israelite wisdom, see pp. 263-83.

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Sirach calls for divine intervention on Israel's behalf on the basis of the temple in Jerusalem, the place of the divine abode. Such underlines Sirach's devotion to the temple and the Jerusalem cult, and his desire that the temple cultus should continue to be a revered institution in the Jewish nation.[1]

The Attack Against Illicit Cultic Practices. Sirach castigates divination (קסם), omenology (נחש), and the interpretation of dreams (חלומות) in 31:1-8, categorizing them as folly (הבל) and delusions of the mind, and judging them to be out of step with the concerns of torah and wisdom.[2] His statements concerning dreams are interesting, since they may be compared and contrasted with Koheleth.[3] Like the pious wise in Job, Sirach gives credence only to those dreams which are sent from the Most High as a warning (v. 6), thus indicating that such dreams should be considered as warnings of coming destruction for sinful actions. Otherwise, dreams are to be avoided as part and parcel of the processes of divination, which Sirach attacks, not because they are forbidden cultic practices (תעבות ליהוה), but because they are foolishness.

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[1] The Greek text reads in 51:13: ἔναντι ναοῦ ἠξίουν περὶ αὐτῆς, "Before the temple I asked for her (wisdom)." But the Qumran text from cave 11 has instead: באה לי בתרה "She (wisdom) came to me in her beauty (or searching)." Delcor prefers the Hebrew reading ("Le text hébreu du cantique de Siracide LI, 13 et ss. et les anciennes versions," *Textus*, VI (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1968), 31f.).

[2] For a cultic condemnation of divination and omenology, save for Urim and Thummim and dreams, see Deut. 18:10.

[3] Koheleth also deprecrates "dreams" (5:2, 6). In addition

In 30:18-20, Sirach speaks of health, which he considers to be a divine gift that should be cherished, for without health the good things of life cannot be enjoyed, especially since illness may eventually plunge one into the depths of death's cold stream. To illustrate his instruction concerning health, he uses a comparative proverb and a rhetorical question, both of which deride idolatry. In an idol satire similar to that of Second Isaiah and to the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach indicates that good things given to one whose lips are sealed in death is like an offering (תנופה) made to an idol (גלול). Then he asks, "What good is such to the idols (אלילי) of the nations who neither eat nor smell?"

The rejection of idolatry is not based on cultic prohibition (Ex. 20:4f.; Dt. 27:15), but rather on the sapiential observation that an idol has no propensity for the consuming of the offering. It is like the dead man who no longer possesses the capacity to eat and drink. We shall return to this matter in the Wisdom of Solomon.

Conclusion. In characterizing Sirach's interest in the institutions and rituals of the Israelite cult, we find no sympathy for remarks made by Pfeiffer and others that the sage did not consider cult as central to his religious understanding, and that "rites and ceremonies *per se* are really insignificant and

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to Crenshaw's study of dreams ("The Problem of Theodicy in Sirach"), see Ernst L. Ehrlich, *Der Traum im Alten Testament*, BZAW, LXXIII (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1953).

ineffective."[1] On the contrary, Sirach regards cultic religion as an essential and important part of both Israel's religious heritage and the wise man's own religious devotion. To regard otherwise would be incongruous with the sage's own teachings and religious piety.

The Wisdom of Solomon

Introduction. Our final investigation is centered on the Wisdom of Solomon, written by an Alexandrian Jewish Sage during the first century B.C., when Alexandria was the leading cultural center for Greek Hellenism in the Near East,[2] a fact that illuminates the form and shape of this piece of sapiential literature.[1] During the lifetime of this sage, anti-Judiasm in an incipient, intellectual form developed in the polemical writings of Hellenistic authors, including Heataeus of Abdera, Mnaseas, Posidonius, Appollonius Molo,

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[1] Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 375. Marböck wrongly insists that there exists a duality of conflicting thought in the mind of Sirach concerning cult, for he believes that while he obviously is supportive of cultic traditions and institutions, his criticism of cult, supposedly seen in his insistence on ethical and social intent in the making of offerings, suggests he has been influenced by the prophetic critique of cult (op. cit., p. 87). However, as we have seen repeatedly, the ancient sages in Israel and in the ancient Near East were just as concerned with ethical and social intent in the cult, and, therefore, there is no need to suggest Sirach has been heavily influenced by the prophets in this matter. He is still at home in the sapiential tradition.

[2] The argumentation for an Alexandrian origin includes the composition of the piece in Greek, the usage of the LXX, the existence of a large Greek-speaking Jewish population in Alexandria during the Hellenistic period, the concentration on the Exodus tradition and the anti-Egyptian polemic, an anti-Jewish literature originating in Alexandria, the apologetic response of other Alexandrian Jewish writers, the address of the "rulers" who were probably the Ptolemies living in Alexandria, the condemnation of the Ptolemaic ruler cult, and the author's acquaintance with Hellenistic thought, culture, and literature which flourished in Hellenistic Alexandria. The date is difficult to determine specifically, but in general the usage of the LXX and the reference to the book by later New Testament writers provide the Terminus a quo and the Terminus ad quem. Other factors include the writer's acquaintance with Sirach, Daniel, and Enoch, and the first century apologetic literature which is comparable to

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this writing. Thus most scholars have pointed to the first century B.C. as the date. See Peter Dalbert, Die Theologie der hellenistisch-jüdischen Missionsliteratur unter Ausschluss von Philo und Josephus (Hamburg-Volksdorf: Herbert Reich, 1954), 71f; Joh. Fichtner, Weisheit Salomos, HAT, VI (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1938), p. 5; A. Goodrich, The Book of Wisdom (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1913), p. 5; R. H. Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times with an Introduction to the Apocrypha, pp. 326f.; and Joseph Reider, The Book of Wisdom (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 14f. The critical text we shall follow is Alfred Rahlfs, Septuaginta, II (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935).

[1] While the book may be generally classified as wisdom literature due to the presence of sapiential forms (proverbs, 3:11, 6:14; instructions 1:1f., 6:1f.) and themes (hymns to wisdom in chapters 6-9, the new role given to wisdom in salvation history, theodicy, and the view of God as creator and retributor of a just cosmic order), it is clear that the Jewish savant has not limited himself to the forms and thought of the Jewish wisdom literature, but has used ideas and forms from Hellenism, including the four cardinal virtues (8:7), the harmony of the elements (chapter 19), a sorites (6:17-20), the argument concerning the knowledge of an artisan by the examination of his works (13:1-5), the stoic idea of a world soul (1:13), and immortality of the soul (see C. Larcher, Études sur le livre de la Sagesse, Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie, 1969), pp. 201f.; and James Reese, Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom and its Consequences, AnBibl, XLI (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970). In addition, he has incorporated Biblical materials, most especially the Salvation History traditions centering on the Exodus (Georg Ziener, Die theologische Begriffssprache im Buch der Weisheit (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1956; and J. Fichtner, "Zur Problem Glaube und Geschichte in der israelitischen-jüdischen Weisheitsliteratur," ThLZ, LXXVI (1951), 146-50), and the eschatological motifs of his contemporary apocalyptists (Johannes Fichtner, "Die Stellung der Sapientia Salomonis in der Literatur-und Geistesgeschichte ihre Zeit," ZNW, XXXVI (1937), pp. 124f.). As concerns the form, Reese has presented good evidence that the genre of the book as a whole is the logos protrepticus, "didactic exhortation," (op. cit., pp. 115f.). Structural analyses have been made by A. G. Wright, "The Structure of the Book of Wisdom," Bib, XLVIII (1967), 165-84; James Reese, "Plan and Structure in the Book of Wisdom," CBQ, XXVII (1965), 391-99; and

Apion, and Damocritus, which sought to discredit the religious and national heritage of Judaism and to break its fierce resistance to syncretism. Atheism (absence of idols, monotheism), barbarisms, nefarious cultic practices including murder, philosophical obtuseness and absurdity, and the worship of a golden ass were among the accusations levelled against the Jews by these and other writers. Not to be upstaged, Jewish men of letters responded with the creation of a body of apologetic and missionary literature aimed at repelling the literary thrusts of the Hellenists, and even at times at converting the Hellenists themselves. This literature included Josephus, Pseudo-Aristeas, Aristobulus, The Wise Menander, the Sibylline Oracles, IV Maccabees, Pseudo-Phocylides, Artapanos, Philo, and the Wisdom of Solomon.[1] Such literature not only served its purpose in the defence of Judaism to its "cultured despisers," but, in addition,

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Patrick Skehan, "The Text and Structure of the Book of Wisdom," Traditio, III (1945), pp. 2f.

[1] In the period of our writer, an incipient anti-Jewish polemic began in Alexandria, nurtured by antagonism over Jewish privileges (freedom of worship, the legal position in which all Jews were regarded as a part of the Jewish nation and legally governed by the central Jewish authority, and governmental respect of Jewish customs), Jewish opposition to syncretism, rigid social customs, an intense national awareness, and the militancy of the Maccabean rule in Palestine (W. D. Davies, "The Jewish State in the Hellenistic World," Peake's Commentary on the Bible [1962], pp. 686-92). The intellectual polemic was Alexandrian, as was the Jewish apologetic/missionary response (Dalbert, op. cit., pp. 14f.). Such a response by Jewish intellectuals included three emphases: monotheism and the evils of idolatry, the spiritual nature of true revelation, and the election of Israel (Davies, op. cit., p. 69). These are found in the Wisdom of Solomon.

had the subsequent result of leading to "a more systematic logical, and metaphysical presentation of Judaism to the Hellenistic World."[1]

Yet the assault from without was equalled by the crisis from within, as Jews of the period were coming to question the validity and importance of their heritage as well as the deity their fathers had worshipped for centuries.[2] This crisis of faith which had burst forth like raging waters from a disintegrated dam during the period of the Babylonian conquest and captivity reached flood-stage during the period of Hellenistic rule, both in terms of the soft enticing wooing of the promiscuous maiden of culture and in the brutal club of Antiochus Epiphanes. Of the many different responses to the crisis of Hellenism made by the Jews of the Hellenistic period, from obeisance to the Greek gods of beauty, culture, philosophy, and religion, to fiery rebellion and warfare, we find our sage choosing a middle road which stressed the validity of the religious, national, and cultural heritage of the Jewish past, but yet at the same time presented it in the new garment of Hellenistic thinking, literature,

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[1] Davies, op. cit., p. 32.

[2] Hengel notes that such a religious crisis was common to many religions and faiths of the fourth century and later, and that it led to three results in the Hellenistic period: a sweeping turn to irrationalism and the existence of secrets which were believed answered only through supernatural revelation; the investigation of basic questions of human life such as the fortune of the soul following death, and the integration of the individual within the cosmos; and a growing interest in the wisdom of the ancient Near East which seemed to offer instruction in the meaning of life (Judentum und Hellenismus, pp. 381f.).

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and language. Thus he saw his task to be the defense of Judaism against the literary assault of Hellenistic authors, primarily in Alexandria, and, in addition, the representation of the faith of the fathers to Jews who, suffering from the intellectual persecution of the Hellenists and the inward crisis of faith during the Hellenistic period, began to respond to the allurements of Hellenistic culture, Greek philosophy, the Mysteries, and the sensual and aesthetic appeal of idolatry.

The Attack Against Foreign Religions. Among the weapons in the arsenal of our Alexandrian sage, one of those most frequently used was the polemic, for our sage rests not as a circumspect defender, but, on the contrary, becomes the abrasive attacker. Such a weapon is used in his critique of pagan religions which were attracting Jewish converts, and to which some of the Hellenistic opponents adhered. Thus his incisive criticism is motivated not only by the quest to oppose the conversion of Jews to these religions, but at the same time he uses the weapon of the opponents who had attacked the foolishness and the less savory aspects of Jewish religion. The frontal assault made by the sage against the major pagan religions of his period is found embedded in the extensive midrash on the traditions of Heilsgeschichte,[1] and is contained

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[1] For studies of the Salvation History material in Wisdom as Midrash, see R. T. Siebeneck, "The Midrash of Wisdom 10-19," CBQ, XXII (1960), 176-82 ; and Pierre Grelot, "Sagesse 10, 21 et la Targum de l'Exode," Bib., XLII (1961), 49. On the other hand, Reese argues against the Midrash form and instead perceives the material to be that of the Greek συγκρισις, "comparison," used for didactic

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primarily in the inclusive section comprising chapters 13-15, though other material is found in 11:15-26 and 12:3-11. The structure of the section has been analyzed by Gilbert as follows:

13: 1- 9 - Philosophical Religion: The Religion of Nature
13:10-19 - The Idolatrous Wood-Cutter
14: 1-10 - The Idolatrous Sea-Farer
14:11-31 - The Invention of Idols and the Origin of Immorality
15: 1- 6 - The Faithfulness of Israel
15: 7-13 - The Idolatrous Potter
15:14-19 - The Religion of Egypt[1]

As we shall see, our sage attacks in general four kinds of religion: the worship of animals by the Egyptians, the worship of nature by the philosophers, the worship of fertility by the Dionysian mystery cult, and the worship of idols by idolators.

Egyptian Religion: The Animal Cults. The most scathing attack of our sage against pagan religions is leveled against the veneration of animals in the ancestral Egyptian cults. The gods in Egypt were conceived not only in anthropological form but, as was the case with most religions of the ancient Near East, also in animal form as well, for the Egyptians saw an intimate relationship between their deities and certain, mysterious, powerful, and 'wise' animals which came to represent symbolically these same characteristics in

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purposes (op. cit., p. 98).

[1] Among the best studies, see Maurice Gilbert, La critique des dieux dans le Livre de la Sagesse, AnBibl, XIII (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1973); Reese, Hellenistic Influence, pp. 115f.; and Friedo Ricken, "Gab es eine hellenistiche Vorlage fur Weish 13-15," Bib., XLIX (1968), 54-86. For a recent study of the critique of pagan religions by the Old Testament writers in general, see Horst Dietrich Preuss, Verspottung fremder Religionen im Alten Testament, BWANT, XCII (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1971).

certain gods, though at times they were taken to be the abode of the gods and even the gods manifest in physical form.[1] Thus we find Anubis associated with the jackal, Hathor with the cow, Bast with the cat, Thoth with the baboon and the ibis, Re with the Mnevis bull, Ptah with the Apis bull, and so forth. Documentation of the association of the gods with certain animals is attested as early as the beginning of the Old Kingdom, and the practice obviously continued into the Hellenistic period as well. For example, the Apis bull continued to be regarded as the incarnation of Osiris, and upon death, its soul journeyed to heaven where it was united with Osiris, forming Osiris-Apis, more commonly known as Serapis. And under Ptolemy I, a Serapeum was established at Alexandria. He brought the statue of Serapis from Pontus to Alexandria, and introduced there the cult of Serapis who became identified with Dionysus, Alexander, and finally the Ptolemaic dynasty.[2] Furthermore Herodotus makes reference to cultic rites in honor of cats, dogs, crocodiles, etc.[3] Thus, when the Alexandrian sage attacks Egyptian animal worship he attacks not only a dead religious practice of the past, but also a vital religion of his own time.

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[1] S. A. B. Mercer, The Religion of Ancient Egypt, pp. 227f. Also see Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, pp. 8f.

[2] Tac. Hist., 4, 83. See H. I. Bell, Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt (Liverpool: At the University Press, 1953), pp. 10f.; and Bonnet, RARG, 816.

[3] Herodotus, II, 65-76. Also see Philo, Dec., 76; and the Letter of Aristeas, 138.

The verbal assault of this sage is most harsh against what he considers to be the most detestable form of religion of his time, that is animal worship practiced by the hated Egyptians in Alexandria.[1] He criticizes animal worship in three different places, seeming never content with an earlier emphasis, and thus returning once more to enforce upon the minds of his audience the horrid features of such a religion: 11:15-26, 12:23-27, and 15:18-16:1. His first criticism of animal veneration occurs in 11:15-26 which is placed in the context of the plagues sent to punish the Egyptians but to bless the Israelites who were not affected by these plagues and were allowed release from Egypt as a result of them. The plagues provided our sage his first opportunity to cast aspersion on the religion of Egypt, being a concrete example of what to our author appeared to be a verification of the principle of retribution in its most specific sense: one "is punished by the very things by which he sins." Thus the irony is that the Egyptians who worshipped "foolish reptiles and worthless animals" (ἐθρίσκευον ἄλογα ἑρπετὰ καὶ κνώδαλα εὐταλῆ) were punished by such animals in the second, third, and fourth plagues which, according to P included frogs, gnats, and fleas.[2] Yet the sending "of multitudes of irrational animals" was not only seen as a verification of the dogma of retribution, an example of the blessings of Israel as opposed to the cursings of Egypt, and as proof of the sinfulness of animal worship, but had the additional function of pointing to the mercy of the Jewish God who certainly had the power to send terrible means of destruction, such as bears, lions, and even more horrible unknown beasts to destroy the Egyptians, but instead sent the plagues of the animals as a warning to turn from their sins, especially the sin of animal worship. Thus the mercy of God is stressed even for those who practice the most detestable of all forms of religion: animal worship.

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[1] Cf. Cicero, Nat. deor., III, 15.

[2] Ex. 8.

The second passage which berates the veneration of animals is found in 12:23-27, when once more our sage develops similar lines of thought with respect to the folly of animal worship. Again he stresses that the Egyptians in the plagues were punished by means of the same animals they had venerated, but he adds that the punishment of this type was sent in order that the Egyptians might be forced to recognize the true God. Two other reasons are stated as to why the Egyptians worshipped despicable animals: folly and unrighteousness. Thus sin, unrighteousness, and foolishness are the reasons men err in worshipping detestable animals instead of the true deity.

The final reference to Egyptian animal worship concludes the section on pagan religions: 15:8-16:1. Once more the Alexandrian sage attacks the Egyptians who worship, not beautiful animals, but the most disgusting of all the animals in terms of their ignorance and repulsive form. Again he emphasizes the principle of retribution in its most specific sense, though he adds in this pericope that the veneration of animals has led to the failure of the Egyptians to praise God and, as a result, to receive his blessing.

Mystery Religions: The Cult of Dionysus. The popular Hellenistic mystery cult centered around the god Dionysus also fell beneath the bludgeon of the Alexandrian sage in two pericopes: 12:3-11 and 14:23-26. The first ostensibly is directed toward the religion of the Canaanites: "those who dwelt of old in thy holy land." This section follows the discussion of Egyptian animal worship and the extended statement concerning the mercy of the deity directed toward even the Egyptians, and has the same purpose of illustrating the mercy of God to pagans in Israel's dim past, for God also destroyed the Canaanites little by little instead of catastrophically in one blow in order to give them "a chance to repent." But, without flinching, our sage adds that God still gave them such an opportunity even though he knew that being "an accursed race from the beginning" (cf. Gen. 9:20f.), they would never repent. Furthermore God's failure to destroy them totally, rested in his mercy and not because of any weakness or intimidation by other weak or non-existent powers. But most important for our concerns is the listing of the cultic practices of Canaanite religion which included: "detestable practices," "sorcery," "unholy rites," "the merciless slaughter of children," and the "sacrifical feasting on human flesh and blood" which is offered "from those who are in their own ranks", including not only the worshippers themselves but also the children as well. Such becomes the apologetic basis for the conquest tradition, according to our sage, for God willed to punish them for such horrible religious rites by means of the conquest of Canaan. Now while our writer is concerned to describe the horrible religious practices of a vanquished people of the past, his concern to speak to his own contemporaries in Alexandria may be gathered from his description of the Canaanite rites in terms of a contemporary ecstatic, fertility religion devoted to the god of fertility and immortality, the Greek god Dionysus. This has been cogently argued by Gill who indicates that while the Canaanites may have on occasion practiced child sacrifice, there is no evidence for the eating of human sacrifices, which, instead, would have been offered as burnt sacrifices. Furthermore, in his comparison of this passage with the writings of the poets Euripides and Aeschylus concerning the Dionysian cult, Gill readily demonstrates that the Alexandrian wise man had borrowed his ideas and description of the Canaanite cult mostly from the writings of the Greek poets in their description of the Dionsysian Mystery.[1]

Dionysus was identified with Osiris in Hellenistic Egypt, a rather easy process since both were fertility gods and gods of

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[1] David Gill, "The Greek Sources of Wisdom XII 3-7," VT, XV (1965), 383-86. Gill sees close comparisons in language and thought between Wisdom and Greek tragedy in this passage (Euripedes, Orestes, 814-18, Medea, 795-97, Bacchae, 72-76, Heracles Furens, 1183-84; and Aeschylus, Choephoroi, 884-86). He concludes concerning the sage: "When he came to write about people who slaughtered children for religious rites, he thought in the categories of the most poignant instances of such things known to him, viz. the Greek stories." (Ibid., p. 385).

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immortality.[1] Such a deity became the center of one of the most popular mystery cults in the Hellenistic world and was widespread in Egypt. It appealed to the individual, especially to women, though eventually it came to be associated with the Ptolemaic ruler cult. The myth of Dionysus involved the general themes of the dying and rising vegetation deity including the death of the god, his body being torn to pieces, his limbs scattered and eventually gathered by a goddess, and the miraculous revival of the god, a point indicated also by his name which literally means "twice born." The cult promised to its adherents the blessings of fertility and, even more important, the gift of immortality, for they could share in the vital powers of their god. The rites of the cult included orgiastic fertility practices, the inducing of the ecstatic state by means of music, dancing, gleaming torches during the nocturnal meetings, and intoxication by wine, and enthusiam, in which the god was believed to dwell within the body of the effeminate high priest during the rituals. The Greek poets attacked the cult for its Bacchanalian practices which were said to include sacrificial murdering and feasting on the bodies of the dead, usually opponents of the cult or a child of a female participant,[1] though one has to admit some scepticism, since sacrificial, religious meals of the flesh and blood of sacrificial animals in which the god was believed to have manifested himself may have been the basis for the possibly misinformed charge of sacrificial murder and feasting on human blood. Christianity was the object of a similar charge during the period of the ancient church. Yet the eating of the flesh and blood of the cultic animal is an indication of the attempt to gain the god's powers of fertility and immortality for the worshipper.

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[1] For studies of this god and his mystery cult, see W. K. C. Guthrie, The Greeks and their Gods (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), pp. 145-82; Bell, op. cit., pp. 18f.; Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), pp. 74f.; and Martin P. Nilsson, Geschichte der Griechischen Religion, II, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, V (München: C. H. Beck, 1950, 329f.).

Now it becomes obvious that the description of the Canaanite cult has been influenced by the Greek poets who described the mystery cult of Dionysus, giving us evidence that our sage wished to use the condemnation of the ancient cult as a pretext for making an attack on the religion of Dionysus of his own day. And it is only the mercy of God, not fear or impotence, that keeps him from completely devastating the practitioners of such a cult in Alexandria.

The second reference to the Dionysian cult is found in 14:23-26, where the sage lists the horrible crimes of those who "celebrate secret mysteries": murder of children, adultery, theft, debauchery, etc. The context for this list is his condemnation of idolatry which he argues is the basis and origin for all sins. We will elaborate on this point in a moment. But the major point of our sage is that such a religion deserves to be severely condemned because of immorality.

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[1] Thus Pentheus, who was a king opposed to the cult in Euripides' Bacchae, eventually was captured and killed by the worshippers, being torn to pieces by his own mother.

Philosophical Religion: The Worship of Nature. In 13:19 the wise man critiques the philosophical cult of nature, primarily the Stoic view of cosmic monotheism, or pantheism, in which the Stoic πνεῦμα ("world-soul," "Zeus") was seen to be divine cosmic and ethical power of generation and force which permeated all reality. Thus the reference by the sage to "fire," "wind," and "air" is a reference to aspects of the Stoic world-soul. His referring to "the stars and the turbulent water" comes from the Stoic idea that the divine sea provided the nourishment for the heavenly bodies.[1]

The sage criticizes philosophers, and most especially the Stoics, for their deification of nature, a criticism which uses the Aristotelian teleological argument that the craftsman is to be differentiated from the ordered work which he constructs.[2] The beauty and order of nature resulted in the philosophical worship of nature, but our author critiques such worship for failing to draw the conclusion that the craftsman who created such order and beauty must be himself superior to his creation. He then utilizes the platonic argument of analogy in v. 5 to underscore his point that

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[1] For a comparison between the philosophical religion attacked in Wisdom and Stoicism, see Gilbert, La critique des dieux, pp. 2f.

[2] Such is paralleled in Epictetus: "Assuredly from the very structure of all made objects we are accustomed to prove that the work is certainly the product of some artificer, and has not been constructed at random." (The Discourses, I, vi, 7).

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the philosophers should have been able to perceive the creator by the process of contemplation in which one makes an anaology between the "greatness and beauty of created things" and their creator who, because he is the artisan of nature, should have been discovered by the philosophers and differentiated from that which he created.[1] The limitation of this religion of the philosophers is caused by their identification of the unifying order of the cosmos, which they referred to as ὁ αἰών, with the Lord himself. Rather, the true deity, δεσπότης, is the artisan of creation, the God to whom our sage refers as ὁ ὤν, the Septuagint's translation of Yahweh in Ex. 3:14. Such a religion receives a good deal of respect from our sage who himself was schooled in the major Greek philosophical traditions, for he says that though they are "not to be excused," they are "little to be blamed." The most exalted form of pagan religion to our sage is philosophical religion, though even this religion receives an incisive critique. But it is commendable when compared to the horrors of animal worship and idolatry.[2]

The Religion of Idolatry. By far the most extensive critique of pagan religions is that of idolatry.[3] This material covers 13:10

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[1] See Gilbert, op. cit., pp. 28f.

[2] He also argues in 13:1 that since all men are ignorant by nature, even the intellectual reason of the philosophers cannot succeed in coming to a knowledge of God, an achievement made possible not by reason, but by revelation.

[3] Fransen and Duesberg have observed: "C'est que l'idolâtrie est à ses yeux une des manifestations les plus choquantes, les plus éclatantes aussi de cette méconnaissance de Dieu, agnōsis tou théou,

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through 16:1, and may be divided into the following units: 13:10-19 ("The Idolatrous Wood-Cutter"); 14:1-10 ("The Idolatrous Sea-Farer"); 14:11-31 ("The Invention of Idols and the Origin of Immorality"); 15:1-6 ("Faithful Israel"); 15:7-13 ("The Idolatrous Potter"); and 15:14-16:1 ("The Religion of Egypt").[1]

The first section devoted to the attack of idolatry occurs in 13:10-19, "The Idolatrous Wood-Cutter,"[2] and involves primarily an extensive description of the wood-cutter who, having cut down a tree in order to fashion a useful vessel for his needs, uses the chips for firewood, and, finally, with a piece of scrap, useful for no good purpose, fashions an idol. Following this, the sage points to the foolishness of the artisan who then devotes himself to the

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qui résume pour lui toute folie humaine." (op. cit., p. 821).

[1] The polemic against idolatry had a long and extensive history in the religion of ancient Israel. Harrelson has cogently argued that the prohibition of images in the Old Testament in general has not so much to do with the idea of a fear of controlling the deity's powers, but rather results from the mystery enshrounding the deity and his being which opposed any effort to depict him in any form (From Fertility Cult to Worship, pp. 14, 47). Von Rad adds that the prohibition also involves the concept of revelation, that is, the deity chooses when and where he will reveal himself (Old Testament Theology, I, pp. 212f.). In Wisdom in Israel, pp. 184f., von Rad has stressed that the prohibition initially is part of cultic law, and that it is condemned as a cultic aberration, whereas by the time of Deutero-Isaiah and later, the Wisdom of Solomon, the attack against idolatry is not based on cultic law, but rather is grounded in "an appeal to sound human intelligence." In other words, it is condemned as foolish, absurd, opposed to human intelligence. For an extensive discussion of the attack against idolatry in the Wisdom of Solomon, see H. Eising, "Der Weisheitslehrer und die Göttesbilder," Bib, XL (1959), 393-408.

[2] Cf. Isaiah 44:9-20 which is an obvious Vorlage for this pericope.

worship of the idol, and makes requests from the idol which the idol is incapable of granting. The irony should be duly noted in the series of contrasts made by the sage who speaks concerning these requests and the subsequent inability of the idol to fulfill them: the requesting of possessions, marriage, and children from that which is lifeless, of health from that which is weak, of life from that which is dead, of aid from that which is inexperienced, of a prosperous journey from that which cannot take a step, and of prosperity, success, and strength from that which is impotent. Ironically the idolatrous wood-cutter asks of an idol that which only he himself is capable of doing, for he possesses life. The folly of idolatry rests in the worshipping of that which a man himself has created and which is far inferior to the man himself.

The second unit concerns "The Idolatrous Sea-Farer" in 14: 1-10 who places a wooden idol on the prow of a ship and prays for protection to "a piece of wood more fragile than the ship which carries him."[1] The purpose in the building of a ship was the "desire for gain," in contrast to the folly of making an idol which can serve no useful purpose. The sage then presents a contrast between the fragile idol and the providence (πρόνοια) of God which has given

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[1] Gilbert has cogently argued for extensive Greek philosophical influence on this passage, especially in regard to the presentation of God as a pilot in order to depict his providence (Ps.-Aristotle, *De Mundo*, 6, 400b, 6f.; Cicero, *Natura deorum*, II, 34, 87; and Philo, *On Providence*, 1, 25).

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to the ship a "path in the sea" and eventually steers the ship safely into port by means of the science of navigation. The building of a ship and the science of navigation are beneficently established within the structure of reality and given the guidelines of wisdom. Thus wood put to a wise and orderly fashion in ship-building and navigation has a good and useful purpose within the ordering of reality. The guidance of the ship by providence receives an example from Jewish religious tradition in Noah and the Ark, but in good sapiential form, for the guiding salvation of the Ark of Noah was implemented by his "righteousness" that was brought to a state of blessing by means of the proper use of wood, whereas the "pride" of the giants of Noah's age brought them to destruction. In contrast, wood put to an unrighteous, improper use, such as in the building of an idol is "cursed" along with the one who is responsible.[1] Finally he speaks concerning the principle of retribution, and the destruction of those, accordingly, who are idolators along with their idols.

The third unit, occurring in 14:11-31 ("The Invention of Idols and the Origin of Immorality"), is perhaps the most interesting as well as most important of all the idolatry pericopes, for it develops two lines of thought: idolatry is the precipitating cause of all immorality (vv. 12, 22-31), and the explanation of the origins of idolatry -- the worship of a statue in commemoration of a dead child (vv. 15-16) and the development of the ruler cult (vv. 17-21). Comparable to the attempt of Euhemerus to explain the origins of the gods in terms of a hero and benefactor cult,[1] our sage seeks to explain the origins of idolatry in two different ways: the statue commemorating a dead child and the statue in honor of a sovereign. The dead child explanation may very well have been borrowed from sources which explained the Dionysian cult as arising from the grief of the father expressed over the death of Dionysus, an influence which may be argued on the basis of v. 15 which refers to "secret rites and initiations" (μυστήρια καὶ τελετάς) practiced in honor of "a dead human being" (νεκρὸν ἄνθρωπον).[2] Other possible allusions may be made by our sage to the deification of children by the Ptolemies, including the dead daughter of Ptolemy II.[3] The second explanation of the origin of idolatry is the practice of venerating idols because of zealous devotion and patriotism shown to the image of an absent ruler who lived in another city or country, and which finally develops into a full-blown ruler cult.[4] The

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[1] Gilbert, op. cit., p. 99.

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[1] See T. S. Brown, "Euhemerus and the Historians," HThR, XXXIX (1946), 259-74.

[2] Gilbert, op. cit., pp. 155f. Cf. the writings of Fulgentius Planciades and Firmicus Maternus.

[3] See Ricken, op. cit., p. 65.

[4] For studies concerning the development of the Ptolemaic ruler cult, consult L. Cerfaux et J. Tondriau, Le cult des souverains (Tournai: Besclee and Cie, 1956); A. D. Nock, "Notes on Ruler Cult," Journal of Hellenic Studies, XLVIII (1928), 21-43; and Nilsson, Geschichte, pp. 125-74. Ptolemy I took the first major steps toward the establishment of the ruler cult when he brought the body of Alexander to Alexandria and initiated a city cult around Alexander,

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development of the Ptolemaic ruler cult in Alexandria, the capital of the Ptolemaic empire, is explained by our sage in terms of the zealous devotion and patriotism of the people of the empire directed towards the image of an absent ruler. The skilled image maker, in his desire to flatter the king, fashions a statue so beautiful that its aesthetic appeal leads eventually to cultic veneration, or in the sage's terms, the "entrapment of mankind."[1] Finally the idol itself is referred to as a deity. One should not omit the contrast between the self-designated divine rulers and the ideal just king, King Solomon (7:1f.), who is presented as stressing his own mortality and human frailties.

The second major line of thought developed in this unit by the sage is the idea that idolatry is the father of immorality, for those who worship idols are accused of throwing off every restraint and practicing every conceivable wickedness.

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associated Alexander with the "fraternal Gods," extended the worship of Alexander into a state cult throughout the empire, and initiated the Serapis cult (Dionysus, Osiris) in Alexandria. Ptolemy II later deified his parents as the "Savior Gods," gave Alexander a consort, Arsinoe (Philadelphos), and perpetuated the Dionysian cult of Alexander. In order to establish a cult of living sovereigns linked to Alexander, he perpetuated the cult of the "Fraternal Gods" in which he and his wife were worshipped during their lifetimes. Finally he extended deification to all the ruling Ptolemies by making them the "Gods who shared the temples." Ptolemy III claimed descent from Dionysus himself, and Ptolemy IV placed tremendous stress on such descent and even placed the deity at the head of the gods in Alexandria. Ptolemy V was finally the first Ptolemy to be enthroned in the manner of the ancient pharaohs, and eventually the queen became identified with Isis, the mother goddess.

[1] Gilbert makes reference to a number of sources which speak concerning the beauty of idols of the gods, especially the passion aroused by statues of Aphrodite (op. cit., pp. 112f.).

After contrasting people who have been seduced by the charms of idolatry with Israel which remained faithful to God in 15:1-6, the sage in 15:7-13 presents a critique of "The Idolatrous Potter." In the condemnation of the potter who makes a clay image, the sage lambasts one who knowingly fashions that which is lifeless, in contrast to himself, for he possesses the breath of life. He also levels the charge of profiteering against the idolatrous potter, who is engaged in his craft for the primary motivation of avarice and greed.[1]

Finally, the sage attacks the idolatry and animal veneration of Egypt (15:14-16:1), and in this section catalogues the frailties and incapacities of idols which cannot see, breathe, hear, feel, and walk, and which are manmade and dead. And he again stresses the foolishness of one who worships that to which he is infinitely superior.

Prayer. While the primary cultic concerns of our sage lay in the gladiatorial combat between Jewish monotheism and pagan religions, he, like his Israelite sapiential ancestors, extols the cultic practice of prayer. His first reference to prayer occurs in 7:7 in the Solomonic section (chapters 7-9) in which Solomon is obviously presented as the ideal, just king who is led to greatness by means of wisdom in contrast to the Ptolemaic rulers who had claimed the status of divinity. In an obvious development of I Kgs. 3:3f., the

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[1] Cf. Demetrius, the idol-maker, in Acts 11:23f.

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sage presents Solomon as one who, having acknowledged his mortality and human birth, prays to God and receives the gift of wisdom, and in the following verses, is blessed because of her with knowledge, prudence, prosperity, honor, the ability to judge, and, most important, immortality.

A second reference to prayer occurs in 16:28-29 in the context of the presentation of the story concerning the beneficent gift of manna to the children of Israel, and from such, our sage draws the admonitory conclusion that those who are blessed by God in such a manner "must rise before the sun to give thanks, and must pray at the dawning of light." Thus he refers to thanksgiving prayer in similar fashion to his sapiential predecessors.

The sage also presents for us a well-structured prayer involving the request of King Solomon for wisdom which was mentioned in 7:7.[1] The concentric structure of the prayer has been analyzed by Gilbert who points to the request of wisdom from the divine as the reoccuring theme found in vv. 4, 10, and 17.[2] The content of the prayer is based primarily on I Kgs. 3:5-15, though ideas added by the sage include the emphasis upon the impotence of human wisdom as compared to the divine wisdom which, when given, guides one in the proper directions of life, and the dominion of man led by wisdom to rule over creation. Finally, in the Solomonic material, the sage refers to Solomon's prayer as including the command to build the Jerusalem temple and the altar, adding that such was to be a copy of the holy tent, and in this manner affirming the P tradition concerning the temple as a copy of the tabernacle.[1]

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[1] As concerns content, this prayer is the specific type of "Prayer for Wisdom." (cf. Sir. 39:5f.).

[2] Maurice Gilbert, "La structure de la prière de Salomon (Sg 9)," Bib, LI (1970), 301-31.

The Passover. Since the emphasis of the midrash on Heilsgeschichte is placed on the Exodus and Wilderness traditions, it is no point of amazement that the sage refers to the first Passover in 18:6-9, and bases his passage on Ex. 12. The context for this text is the discussion of the sage's belief that the same means of punishing the wicked becomes the means for the blessing of the righteous. Thus the plague of the death of the first-born is a terrible punishment for the detested Egyptians, but it results in God's blessing for the righteous who not only are spared the devastating results of the plague, but achieve their deliverance as a consequence.

The reference to the cultic ritual of the Passover includes the offering of sacrifice, the agreement to follow the divine law (νομος), and the singing of the praises of the fathers. The sacrifice obviously refers to the pascal lamb, the hymns probably to the

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[1] See Ex. 25-31 and 35-40. It should be noted that hymns and hymnic language and motifs are scattered throughout the work, especially in terms of the Isis-influenced portrayal of hypostatized wisdom in chapters 6f. But the most important passage is 10:20-21 which alludes to the Song of Moses and the Song of Miriam which were praises to God made possible by Wisdom who "opened the mouth of the dumb, and made the tongues of babes speak clearly." This intimates that the wise composed hymns, a point also made by Sirach.

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Hallel psalms which according to Pes. 117a were sung on Passover,[1] and the divine law concerning the sharing of both good fortune and dangers probably refers to the institution of the Passover as a cultic law to be followed henceforth, regardless of the circumstances.[2]

Aaron, the High-Priest. Finally, in the references to the Wilderness tradition, the sage refers in 18:20-25 to the High Priest Aaron who according to P made intercession during the devastating plague inflicted by God because of the "murmuring of the people" against Moses and Aaron following the terrible end of the Levitical rebellion led by Korah. In the P account of the Story, Aaron takes a censer and fills it with fire from the altar and incense in order to make atonement for the people. Such an action was credited with stopping the devastating plague.[3] Our sage refers to this story by presenting Aaron as a "blameless" man whose major tools were "prayer and intercession."[4] Thus in the frequently developed theme of the power of the intercession made by the just and righteous man Aaron brings the plague to an end. The emphasis is placed upon his accomplishment of this task by his "word" (λόγος), and not by "force of arms," for Aaron appealed to God on the basis of oaths and the covenants of the fathers, a common practice in prayers to initiate a favorable divine response. Finally, the sage also points to the robe,[1] the diadem, and the four rows of stones found on the breastplate of the high priest and stresses that these stopped the plague of the "destroyer."[2] Such a fascination with the priestly apparel of the high priest is comparable to other Jewish writers, including Sirach as we mentioned earlier.[3] But to this sage it is the power of the just man, especially the high priest, which can effectively turn away the destructive powers of divine punishment.

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[1] Joseph Reider, The Book of Wisdom, p. 208. Cf. II Chron. 30:21 and 35:15.

[2] Against Jaubert who has argued that the reference to the law is an insertion of the celebration of the covenant by our author into the celebration of Passover (La notion d'alliance dans le Judaisme, [Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963], p. 355.

[3] Num. 16:40f.

[4] Cf., e.g., Job in th e epilogue. Jaubert remarks: "Peut-être n'est-il pas indifférent que l'intercession d'Aaron s'exerce ici non pas des victimes expiatoires, mais essentiellement par la prière. Tel était le modèle pour la communauté de la Sagesse qui ne pouvait-sans doute! - offrir de sacrifices sanglants " (op. cit., p. 354).

Conclusion. The cultic concerns of the sage of Alexandria rested primarily in his attack of pagan religions, which is certainly not an entirely new interest in Israelite wisdom,[4] for as we have seen, the warnings against fertility religion in Prov. 1-9, Job's oath incorporating his refusal to participate in Mesopotamian astral worship, and Sirach's brief criticism of idolatry indicate that the wise before him were also concerned with opposing religious apostasy as well. The significance of this should not be overlooked in terms of our investigation, for this demonstrates that Israel's wise, and we should probably include the wise in the states of Mesopotamia and Egypt, were not tolerant, or unconcerned, men of the world who placed themselves above the disputes of religious provincialism and controversy, a point which casts some doubt on the thesis of an international body of sages whose ideology was cosmopolitan in nature, spirit, and practice.

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[1] An allegorical interpretation of the robe may be seen in his seeing in the designs on the robe the entire cosmos, and thus, seems to present Aaron as a figure of the intercession of the cosmos on behalf of the righteous (see Jaubert, op. cit., pp. 353-54).

[2] See Ex. 28.

[3] Also see Josephus, Ant, III, 7, 7; and Philo, Mos, III, 11-14. Josephus also gave a cosmological interpretation: the blue vestment symbolized the sky, the girdle the ocean, the diadem heaven, and the sardonyx buttons on the shoulder the sun and the moon.

[4] Against Preuss, op. cit., p. 273.

Conclusions

On the basis of our analyses of the major Israelite wisdom literature, it may be concluded that the Hebrew sages considered cultic religion to be a significant topic of sapiential interest. As the traditional wise studied the various compartments of world order overseen by a just deity, they concluded that the cult had its own very important place within the structure of cosmic and social order. The spheres of nature and cult were seen to be intimately entwined by the sagacious teacher in Prov. 3:9-10 who instructs his students that righteous observation of the cultic law to give to God the first fruits of harvest will lead to increased yields. The close relationship of the social order and the cult is obvious in a number of sapiential texts, including the frequent categorization of cultic acts as "pleasing" or "abominable" on the basis of the socio-ethical behavior of the cultic participant in Prov. 10-31 and Sirach.

The traditional wise also believed that the principle of retribution functioned within the sphere of the cult, a dogma which led them to caution their adherents to participate in the realm of the cult as wise cultists, exuding the sapiential traits of the "silent man," and to avoid the foolish cultic behavior of the "heated man" whose behavior would lead him to destruction.

It is also extremely important to note that the Israelite sages often enter into an attack against foreign religions, especially fertility cults and the cults of astral deities, a point that indicates that these wise were not tolerant religionists whose possession of a worldly *savoir-faire* would cause them to dismiss as provincial the polemics of the Yahweh cult. Yet they do not condemn foreign religions and warn against participation in these cults by Israelite sages merely on the basis of sacral law, but rather from their own sapiential perspectives.

The Israelite wisdom literature also bespeaks of a critical wisdom tradition which strikes at the theological foundations of cultic religion. The twin concepts of a just order permeating the cosmos, society, and religion and of retribution established and overseen by a just deity are soundly thrashed by Job and Koheleth. While the poetic Job ends in an apparent affirmation of the importance of cultic piety which is no longer based on the ideas of order and retribution, Koheleth, also denying the validity of order and justice, chooses to speak only of the destructive side of the holy which is experienced by the frenetic fool, and finally concludes that, in view of the ultimate fate of all men, death, cultic observance and the disdain of cultic participation ultimately are meaningless.

Finally, it is obvious that the Hebrew sages participated in the writing of extensive units of poetry, including many pieces which are most similar to cultic genres. This fact provides us with the basis for our next investigation: the Wisdom Psalms.

CHAPTER V

THE WISDOM PSALMS

A. Introduction

Wisdom Psalms in Modern Scholarship

In our final chapter devoted to the analysis of the views of the wise concerning cult, we shall shift our interest from the examination of sapiential passages which speak of cult to what we shall hope to demonstrate as the chapter progresses: the contributions of the wise to the creation of literary, didactic psalms. If we are successful in identifying a corpus of sapiential psalms embedded within the Israelite Psalter, then we shall have indisputable evidence for the positive participation of the wise in the writing of pious, and possibly even cultic literature, evidence which may further buttress our thesis that the wise, that is, the pious, traditional wise, regarded the cult as an important area within the structure of world order.

The Gattung of Wisdom Psalms has received different assessments from modern scholars, from Ivan Engnell, on one hand, who has categorically rejected such a classification to Roland Murphy whose studies have convinced him of the definite existence of such a genre.[1]

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[1] Ivan Engnell, "The Book of Psalms," A Rigid Scrutiny (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, p. 99). Engnell's rejection of such a genre rests upon his rigid cultic interpretation of the psalter, and apparently upon his mistaken belief that the wise had nothing to do with the cult. For Murphy's brief, but superbly argued, investigation, see "A Consideration of the Classification 'Wisdom Psalms'," VTS, IX

Let us first examine the assessments of leading psalmodic and wisdom scholars with respect to the existence and analysis of this genre, and then move into our own identification and genre analysis.

Hermann Gunkel, in his fundamental Einleitung in die Psalmen, gave some attention to the existence of what he referred to as Weisheitsdichtung within the psalter which he discovered possessed form-critical and thematic characteristics common to Old Testament sapiential writings as well as wisdom literature from the ancient Near East. Gunkel apparently regarded the following as products of the sages: Pss. 1, 37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128, and 133, and several others which were influenced to some degree by wisdom. In terms of methodology, Gunkel was one of the earliest psalmodic scholars to utilize what has been until now two criteria in the identification of these psalms: the presence of sapiential language and the existence of wisdom themes.[1]

A second major psalmodic scholar of this century, Sigmund

(Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 156-167.

[1] Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, Einleitung in die Psalmen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1933), pp. 386-97. Fichtner also briefly examined the wisdom psalms in his classic introduction: "Die Weisheitspsalmen sind nach einem an der übrigen bibl. Chokmaliteratur gebildeten inhaltlichen und formalen Massstab aus dem Psalter auszusondern. An Hand dieses Massstabes kann man einige Psalmen bzw. Psalmenteile als Proverbien-Psalmen (34:12-23, 37, 112, 128, ähnlich 127 und 133), einige als 'Hiob-Psalmen' (49, 73) bezeichnen. Dazu treten das Wshtslied, das den Psalter einleitet (Ps 1), einige Psalmen, die von Wshtsmotiven durchsetze sind (32:8-11, 94:8ff., 111, bes. 10) und zwei, die sich mit der Wsht, wie sie das Gesetz bietet, beschäftigen (119, bes. 97-103, wohl auch 19b, bes. 8). Wir halten Ps 1, 19b, 94, 111, 112, und 119 für jünger als die übrigen und meinen, sie um 300 ansetzen zu dürfen " (Die altorientialische Weisheit, p. 9).

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Mowinckel, has done a considerable amount of study in the investigation of wisdom psalms which he classified as "learned psalmography," a corpus of psalms which he believes were "non-cultic" in origin and purpose. Such a classification of psalms was also identified by Mowinckel on the basis of the presence of sapiential forms ("saying," "proverb," "exhortation") and wisdom themes (theodicy, retribution, the contrast between the righteous and unrighteous). According to Mowinckel's analysis, such psalms were written as "didactic prayers" directed to God, but also intended to instruct men in sapiential ideas. Mowinckel's classification included Pss. 1, 34, 37, 49, 78, 105, 106, 111, 112, and 127.[1]

The most extensive analysis of wisdom psalms has been made by Herman Jansen who examined sapiential psalms not only in the psalter but also in a rather broad expanse of late Intertestamental literature including the Psalms of Solomon, the Prayer of Manasseh, Sirach, the Wisdom of Solomon, Daniel, Baruch, I, II, and III Maccabees, Esther, Judith, and Tobit. Jansen concluded that the wise were responsible for the creation of the late Jewish psalms, and, as such, their form and content were transformed by the sapiential writers who gave the originally cultic genres sapiential character, and wrote them primarily, not for usage in the temple cult, but rather as instruction material for sages within the circles of the wise: the school, temple and synagogue. Now while Jansen placed his interests primarily in psalms outside the psalter, he did argue that there were wisdom psalms in the psalter: 1, 37, 49, 73, 91, 112, 127, 128, and 133, which were written by the sages in the context of a wisdom school located near the temple for the two-fold purpose of cultic devotion and sapiential instruction, and it is from these sages and their wisdom psalms that eventually developed the literary psalms intended primarily for instruction and not for cultic service.[1]

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[1] Sigmund Mowinckel, "Psalms and Wisdom," VTS, III (1955), pp. 205-224. Also see his article, "Traditionalism and Personality in the Psalms," HUCA, XXIII (1950/51), pp. 2f.

More recently, Gerhard von Rad has investigated a sapiential corpus of psalms which, like Mowinckel, he classified as Lehrgebete, a rather general classification based once more upon the presence of sapiential forms and themes within this body of psalms. However, von Rad believed that such a classification lacked the identifiable structure of other major psalmodic genres, so that one could speak only in very general terms about such a classification. Further, von Rad argued that this corpus emits evidence of the appropriation of the structure, language, and themes of the other major genres which were recast by the sages into sapiential Gebete. Thus the sapiential psalm in Tobit 13:1 appropriated the form and language of the Hymn, Psalms 1, 34, 37, 49, 73, 111, 112, 119, 127, 128, and 139 used the structure and language of the Torah Psalms, and 49, 73, and 139 were

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[1] Herman Ludin Jansen, Die spätjüdische Psalmendichtung. Ihr Entstehungskreis und ihr 'Sitz im Leben.' (Oslo: I Kommisjon Hos Jacob Dybwab, 1937).

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Problem-oder Reflexions-dichtungen.[1]

One of the most incisive form-critical studies in the area of wisdom psalms has been done by Roland Murphy. Having recognized the diversity of scholarly opinion as pertains to this sapiential Gattung, Murphy set forth distinctive form-critical and thematic criteria for the identification of wisdom psalms. The stylistic and linguistic forms which Murphy regarded as typically sapiential and were present in a number of psalms included: the 'ashrê formula, the numerical saying, the "better" saying, the proverb, the admonition, the address of a teacher to his "son," and the acrostic. Sapiential themes which were present in a number of psalms included: the contrast between the wicked and the righteous, the two ways, the preoccupation with the problem of evil, practical advice as regards conduct, and the "fear of the Lord." Upon the basis of these two criteria, Murphy regarded the following as wisdom psalms: 1, 32, 34, 37, 49, 112, and 128.[2]

Most recently, James Crenshaw in his definitive study of the major wisdom forms has included an analysis of wisdom psalms.

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[1] Weisheit in Israel, pp. 70f.

[2] Murphy, op. cit. He ends his essay by concluding: "We may conclude that it is feasible to speak of 'wisdom psalms' as a literary form parallel to other psalm types. They merit separate classification... Other types of psalms incorporate wisdom elements but remain formally hymns, or thanksgivings, etc." (p. 167).

Beginning with a brief study of wisdom hymns in Proverbs (1:20-33; 8), Job (28), Sirach (24), and the Wisdom of Solomon (6:12-20; 7:22-8:21), he moves then into the arena of wisdom psalms. Noting the disparity which exists among scholars concerning which psalms should belong to this category, and referring to the difficulties which beset the scholar in explicitly distinguishing the boundaries between psalms which are actually written by the wise and those which demonstrate sapiential influence in terms of forms and themes, he proceeds to examine possible psalmodic candidates for this wisdom genre and includes: 1, 19, 33, 39, 49, and 104. He points to wisdom influence in Pss. 94, especially in vv. 8-11, and 127. Crenshaw's methodology is the same used by the other major scholars for the identification of wisdom psalms: the presence of wisdom language and themes, though his application is more admirably demanding.[1]

Methodology

Now it should come as no surprise to us that the wise wrote didactic poems, some of which are comparable to well known genres of psalmodic literature, a point that we have made repeatedly throughout the preceding chapters. The didactic poems of the wise which we have discussed previously include the "Song of the Harper," the fourth chapter of Amen-em-Opet which contrasted the "silent man" and the "heated man," the poem concerning the inaccessibility of wisdom (Job 28), and the poetry which is similar to different genres

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[1] James L. Crenshaw, "Wisdom," pp. 247-53.

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of psalms including the "lament" of "The Debate of the Man Tired of Life with his own Soul," the "Shamash Hymn," and the beautiful masterpiece of Sirach which is a didactic hymn in 39:12-35. Furthermore, we have repeatedly pointed to a number of ancient Near Eastern wisdom texts which reflect over the theology and ritual and even appropriate the style and language of the lament-thanksgiving cycle found in ancient Near Eastern psalms: "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom," Nougayrol's "righteous sufferer" psalm, and "A Man and His God" from Mesopotamian wisdom circles, and from Israel the Dialogues of Job and Sirach's "A Lament for the Deliverance of the Nation," "An Individual Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Sin and Death," and "A Prayer for Self-control." Such may be intimately connected to the emphasis upon prayer made by the sages throughout ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature, since the lament and the thanksgiving are the primary types of "prayers." That the wise were familiar with and composed psalmodic literature may be concluded not only from the existence of such literature in sapiential texts, but also from a Mesopotamian schoolboy examination text[1] in which a reference is made to the material over which a novitiate had

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[1] See "Examination Text A" from the Old Babylonian II Period, translated and analyzed by Benno Landsberger, "Scribal Concepts of Education," City Invincible, A Symposium on Urbanization and Cultural Development in the Ancient Near East (Chicago: The University of Chicago press, 1958), pp. 94-123. He comments: "We learn that the well-trained scribe had to be acquainted with the art of the nar, the musician, and with all the different genres of this highly developed Sumerian specialty." (p. 99). The lines which are germane to our point are translated:

no. 10. To understand the occult language of all classes of priests and members of other professions.
12. All categories of songs and how to conduct a choir.
14. Other complicated and intentionally distorted languages

to be tested, and among the material to be covered on the examination were psalmodic genres, probably alluding to the fact that such literature was used as instructional models in the wisdom schools. Sirach also says, as we indicated earlier, that hymns were taught in wisdom circles (15: 9-10), and in fact demonstrates this by his artistically constructed didactic hymn that we examined above.

Now our basic problem is to search out and to analyze possible candidates for the classification of wisdom psalms in the Hebrew psalter. The methodology for doing so will include not only the above mentioned criteria of the presence of sapiential forms, language, and themes,[1] but in addition the methodology of New Stylistics, a method we have previously used in our investigation of the sapiential structure

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of professional groups like the shepherds and scribes.

15. The use and technique of various musical instruments. (Ibid., p. 100). In the legendary narratives concerning Solomon, the wise king is credited with writing among other wisdom forms 1,005 "songs" (שירים) supporting the argument that the wise composed didactic songs.

[1] The three pronged methodology used to identify wisdom psalms does contain certain hazards and limitations. First of all, in a cultural milieu shared by prophet, priest, and sage it is not surprising to discover possible examples of borrowing of formal elements of language. Furthermore, many vocabulary words were obviously shared by these different groups. A case in point is the polarity of the "wicked" and the "righteous," religio-ethical categories of people found in cultic, prophetic, and sapiential texts. Finally, it is true that certain themes are common to the three goups, especially is this true of the theme of retribution. Thus, while these criteria are useful in the identification of wisdom psalms, they cannot bring to bear a much needed precision. We shall argue that these criteria coupled with structural analysis will provide us with such precision.

of Psalm 49.[1] We shall demonstrate that the structure and the content of most wisdom psalms are based upon a simple wisdom form such as a proverb, riddle, and *'ashrê* saying. Thus it is this form and its contents which provide the foundation for the development of the structure and content of the didactic psalm. As we seek to identify and analyze wisdom psalms in the Hebrew psalter, we shall examine sapiential forms, themes, language, and structure.

Life Situation

Before beginning our task, we should speak to the issue of the life situation of wisdom psalms. The life situations in general for the various kinds of wisdom literature are varied and most difficult to assess. Christa Bauer-Kayatz has argued for several different life situations, including the tribe or family, the court, and the school.[2]

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[1] "The Riddles of Psalm 49," *JBL*, XCIII (1974), 533-42. For introductions to "New Stylistics," see David Greenwood, "Rhetorical Criticism and Formgeschichte," *JBL*, LXXXIX (1970), 418-26; James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL*, LXXXVIII (1969), pp. 1-18; Luis Alonso Schökel, *Estudios de Poética Hebrea* (Barcelona: Juan Flors, 1963), and Meir Weiss, *The Bible and Modern Literary Theory* (Mod. Heb.) (Jerusalem: The Biailik Institute, 1967). For an application of the method to wisdom literature, see Addison Wright, "The Riddle of the Sphinx," pp. 313-34. For studies of the psalms which utilize the method, see N. H. Ridderbos, *Die Psalmen*, BZAW, CXVII (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972); and Meir Weiss, "Wege der neuen Dichtungswissenschaft in ihrer Anwendung auf die Psalmenforschung," *Bib*, XLII (1961), pp. 255-302.

[2] *Einführung in die alttestamentliche Weisheit*, pp. 9f. Also see Crenshaw, "Wisdom," pp. 227f. For the tribe or family, see Erhard Gerstenberger, *Wesen und Herkunft des 'Apodiktischen Rechts'*, WMANT, XX (Neukirchener Verlag, 1965), pp. 110f.; for the court, see W. Richter, *Recht und Ethos* (München: Kösel, 1966); and for the wisdom school, see H.-J. Hermisson, *Studien zur Israelitischen Spruchweisheit*, pp. 96f.

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When we turn to consider wisdom psalms, however, most wisdom scholars would seek their origins in the context of a wisdom school, the existence of which, however, remains obscured by the lack of explicit evidence, at least with respect to Israelite wisdom literature, though the abundance of evidence in the ancient Near East proves beyond question the existence of schools in Egypt and Mesopotamia, and, in our view, schools of a similar nature must have existed in ancient Israel as well.[1] Thus von Rad, Mowinckel, and Jansen have argued that the wisdom psalms were produced in a wisdom school in which the wise sought to instruct their students in different genres of literature, including cultic forms. The eventual appearance of the wisdom psalms in the psalter, so these men have argued, occurred in the late post-exilic period when scribes who were connected with the cult and who were the final collectors of the psalter included some of the psalmodic writings of their sagacious ancestors. Thus when the wise, who originally were attached to the court in pre-exilic times, became scribes of Torah and found their locus in the post-exilic temple and temple cult, we find them writing and collecting wisdom psalms

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[1] Hermisson surmises that a wisdom school in Israel may have existed from the period of the Grossreich of David and Solomon, being patterned upon an Egyptian model, though most probably mediated through Canaanite schools under significant Egyptian influence from especially the Amarna period. It is here that the major wisdom materials of the pre-exilic period (Proverbs) were composed, collected, and transmitted. During the same period, cultic materials were collected in a separate temple school by the priests. Now after the end of the kingdom period, according to Hermisson, the two schools merged, and, of course, cult became the dominant institution in the post-exilic times. Among the literature written during this period were the wisdom psalms in the context of the temple school (op. cit.). While such a thesis is suggestive, the lack of explicit evidence relegates Hermisson's ideas to the realm of tentative theory.

(cf. Ben Sira).[1] However, the creation of wisdom psalms, in our opinion, is not simply limited to the post-exilic period, but some most probably were written in the pre-exilic age, for it is apparent that similar writings had existed for centuries in the wisdom traditions of the ancient Near East, and it would seem that to deny the Israelite wise the capability or interest to write wisdom psalms in the pre-exilic period is without cogency.[2] The late post-exilic dating for the production of the wisdom psalms by some scholars is predicated on the false assumption that the pre-exilic wise were secularists and became religious pietists only in the late post-exilic times.[3]

The primary question which should concern us, however, is whether the sages intended their writings for usage in the cult, or whether they were merely academic exercises in the creation of literature. Unfortunately, there is no easy solution to such a difficult question. Two possibilities lay before us. One is that they were created within the wisdom school for instruction of students in the techniques of artistic, literary composition, as well as for the indoctrination of sapiential ideas, and, as such, do exude, as we shall see, a spirit in most instances of pious devotion to God as creator, redeemer of the oppressed, requiter of the good and the evil; in other words the God who oversees world-order. But they were not originally intended for use in the liturgy of the temple cult. Their appearance in the psalter, as indicated above, was due to scribal redactors who placed them in the psalter. A second possibility is that such songs were the contributions of the wise to the creation of liturgical literature, and, as such, were intended to be used in the temple worship. It is possible that such songs were written by temple scribes trained in the wisdom traditions whose mastery of sapiential language and ideas led them to write the wisdom psalms. It is the second alternative to which we shall adhere, for it is our opinion that these psalms were intended for use in the temple cult, and as such were the contributions of the wise to the literature of the Israelite cultus.

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[1] Mowinckel even suggests that such psalms were included in the psalter due to their possible production as votive stelae written by the sages and then offered by them in the temple ("Psalms and Wisdom," pp. 204f.).

[2] We would argue that on the basis of language and themes at least the following show every tendency of being pre-exilic: 19A, 34, 49, and 73.

[3] For example, Scott, The Way of Wisdom, pp. 190f.

B. Proverb Psalms

As we identify and analyze the wisdom psalms, we shall primarily be concerned with the didactic structure. And, as we shall see, the structure of each wisdom psalm is developed primarily around a simple saying: a proverb, a riddle, or an *'ashrê* saying. And yet, these simple sayings provide not only the locus for the structural formation of the didactic psalms, but, in addition, contain the sapiential thesis concerning which the poetic psalm reflects and seeks to develop and extend into several various areas of sapiential thinking. The first such category of wisdom psalms then is the Proverb Psalm in which an extended psalm may appropriate from sapiential categories such as the didactic poem, the instruction, and the poem in praise of torah or from the major psalmodic genres such as the thanksgiving and the lament, but the structure and content of the psalm are developed upon a simple proverbial saying.[1]

Psalm 1: "A Didactic Poem Concerning the Righteous and the Wicked"

Introduction. In regard to our methodology for the identification and analysis of the genre of wisdom psalms, Psalm 1 may be classified as a wisdom psalm,[2] and, more specifically as pertains to its structural basis, a Proverb Psalm, since, as we shall demonstrate, the structure and the content of the psalm are taken from the simple proverb found at the end of this didactic poem in v. 6. As pertains to sapiential forms, the psalm contains the following: an 'ashrê,[1]

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[1] The identification of a saying within a larger poetic unit is no simple task. In our efforts to identify and isolate an individual proverb which may provide the locus for the structure and thesis of the proverb psalm, we shall utilize the following criteria:

1. First, the presumed saying should contain the major characteristics of a Hebrew proverb: one stich consisting of two hemistichs which demonstrate parallelism and other elements of proverbial poetry.
2. Second, the presumed saying should be a third person observation of reality which "registers a conclusion based on experience" (Crenshaw, "Old Testament Form Criticism," p. 231).
3. Third, one should be able to isolate the saying from the larger didactic unit into which it has been placed. For example, this can easily be done, if the presumed saying initiates, concludes, or exists apart from the major strophes of the psalm.
4. Fourth, the saying should find parallels in the proverbs of other wisdom literature of the ancient Near East, especially those in Proverbs, Koheleth, and Sirach.

[2] Most scholars have classified the psalm as a wisdom psalm (B. Duhm, Die Psalmen, HKAT, XIV [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1899], 1; Mitchell Dahood, Psalms, I, AB, XVI (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), 1; Hermann Gunkel, Die Psalmen, HKAT, XVI (Göttingen:

Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1926), p. 1; and H.-J. Kraus, Psalmen, I, 2nd. ed. (Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), p. 2; and Jansen, Die spätjüdische Psalmendichtung, p. 136). True to form, Engnell attempts to regard the psalm as originally a royal, cultic psalm, due to the motif of the "tree of life" ("Planted by Streams of Water," Studies Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen [Einar Munksgaard, 1953], pp. 85-96. Lipiński regards the psalm as a "psalm of congratulations" extended to pilgrims who, having been healed from illness, are granted access to the temple area to worship God ("Macarismes et psaumes de congratulation," RB, LXXV [1968], p. 338).

[1] The 'ashrê form has been extensively investigated by Waldemar Janzen ("'Asrê in the Old Testament," HThR, LVIII [1965], pp. 215-26) and Lipiński, op. cit., pp. 321f. Janzen's only "contribution" is the untenable conclusion that אשרי should be translated "to be envied," for it is an expression issuing forth from one who makes the exclamation concerning another person who is in a more enviable position than he. One wonders if this is what the early Christian redactionists had in mind when they placed a series of these sayings in the mouth of Jesus! Lipiński's study deserves a more meritorious characterization, though his arguments that the form originated in the language of the cult, and not that of wisdom, is based on the mistaken antithesis he draws between wisdom and cult, and upon the presupposition that the psalms are entirely cultic and contain no wisdom forms or even wisdom psalms. He does demonstrate in an important discussion that a parallel expression which may well have influenced the Hebrew expression is found in Egyptian psalms from the Theban necropolis in the epoque of the Ramesside Kings of the 13th century, an expression which is used concerning pilgrims who are coming to worship in the temple. However, our own investigation of the form reveals that of the 45 times in which the form is used, 26 are in sapiential contexts, while the majority of the remaining 19 are in contexts either influenced by wisdom language or redacted by wisdom scribes. The only passage supporting Lipiński's thesis of a cultic origin is Ps. 65:4. But the overwhelming evidence that the form is a sapiential one cannot be negated by one psalm where the term is used in a cultic context. We agree therefore with Gerstenberger who comments: "The woe as well as the bliss-formula had its origin in the wise men's reflection about the conditions of this world." ("The Woe-Oracles of the Prophets," JBL, LXXXI [1962], p. 261). In addition, Dupont's observation that the Egyptian expression rs wj also occurs in sapiential as well as cultic contexts (see the last line of the "Prayer to Thoth," ANET, p. 379; Amen-em-Opet XXIV, 19-20; and Ptah-hotep, p. 557) demonstrates not only a possible borrowing of the term from Egypt by the Israelite sages, but also supports the wisdom origin of the expression. (Jacques Dupont, "'Béatitudes' égyptiennes," Bib, XLVII [1966], 185-222).

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two parabolic sayings (vv. 3-4),[1] an antithetical proverb[2] which is the central saying around which the psalm is constructed (v.6), and the form of the didactic poem which embodies the entire psalm.[3] Sapiential terminology present in the psalm includes the terms 'ashrê, "council" (עצה), "wicked" (רשעים), "sinners" (חטאים), "mockers" (לצים), and "righteous" (צדיקים). As regards sapiential themes, this psalm, taking its content from the central proverb in v. 6, contrasts the fate of the righteous (צדיקים) and the wicked (רשעים), which is dealt out in terms of the just retributive system of rewards and punishments by the Lord, the guardian of retribution. One also finds the late developing wisdom theme of meditating on the "Instruction of Yahweh," the Torah.[4] Finally, as we shall see, the application of the methodology of New Stylistics reveals a skillfully composed literary structure.

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[1] Parabolic sayings and parables are common in ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature, and are most often used to illustrate gnomic sayings (See Ecc. 9:13-16; Ecclus. 13:2, James 1:7-11, Matt. 13:1-52, etc.).

[2] Similar proverbs are found in Prov. 3:33, 10:27, Ps. 37:18, 28, etc.

[3] Unfortunately the didactic poem has received almost no attention of scholars up to this time (cf. von Rad, Wisdom in Israel, pp. 38f.). A comparable wisdom poem to Psalm 1 is that found in Sirach 14:20f. In addition, the "Poem on the Ideal Housewife" in Prov. 31:10f. is another well known didactic poem.

[4] Such is common in Sirach and the Torah Psalms (19b, 119).

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Translation[1] and Structural Analysis.

Strophe I (E)

'Ashrê A (1) Happy is the man
(2) who neither walks in the community of the wicked,
(3) nor stands in the dominion[2] of sinners,
(4) nor sits in the assembly[3] of scoffers.

Insertion D (But rather his delight is in the Law of the Lord,)
(And in his Law he meditates both day and night.)

Parable B (5) For he is like a tree planted by channels of water,
(6) Which gives forth its fruit in its season,
(7) And its foilage does not wither.

Concluding Observation C (8) And all which he does shall prosper.

Strophe II (E^1)

Introductory Observation C^1(1) However, the evil ones do not (prosper);

Parable B^1(2) Rather they are like the chaff which the wind blows away.

Proverb A^1(3) (Therefore) the wicked do not stand in judgment,
(4) Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

Central Proverb

E (1) (Because) God knows the way of the righteous,
(2) But the way of the wicked will perish.

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[1] There exist no major textual problems in this psalm.

[2] See Ugaritic drkt (Dahood, Psalms, I, 2).

[3] The translation of עצת as "assembly, community" is cogently argued by Roland Bergmeier who also believes that the term should be

As is apparent from our analysis, the psalm consists of two strophes which exhibit external, antithetical parallelism, and each consists of three chiastically arranged units (A, B, C; C^1, B^1, A^1). Thus A is contrasted with A^1 (the righteous is not a part of the community of the wicked even as the wicked are not a part of the community of the righteous); B with B^1 (the parable of the fruitful tree and the parable of the windswept chaff); and C with C^1 (the prosperity of the righteous and the misfortune of the wicked).[1] Furthermore, the first strophe exactly doubles the length of the second, in that the first possesses 8 hemistichs, whereas the second has 4. The structure of the two strophes of the psalm parallels the key proverb, a chiastic, antithetical saying, which independently stands outside the structure of the two, three unit strophes. And yet in terms of content and structure the proverb is the locus around which the content and the structure of the highly artistic didactic poem has been built. The first hemistich of the proverb provides the basis for the first strophe, whereas the second hemistich that for the second strophe.[2] The two hemistich unit D, placed in Strophe I, may be regarded as an insertion, since it contains no parallel in Strophe II,

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translated "assembly" in certain Qumran texts (IQS 5:7, 6:3, 14, 16, and 8:2, 24, 11:8; "Zum Ausdruck עצת רשעים in Ps. 1:1, Hi. 10:3, and 22:18," ZAW, LXXIX [1967], pp. 229f.).

[1] This psalm was first recognized as a chiastic psalm by Nils Lund, "Chiasmus in the Psalms," AJSL, XLIX (1932-33), pp. 294-95, though he failed to regard the proverb in v. 6 as independent of the two strophes.

[2] Paul Auvray concludes that the psalm is written to amplify the maxim of V. 6 ("Psaume I," RB, LIII [1946], 370).

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has an imperfect verb (יהגה) following a series of perfect verbs and thus is syntactically awkward, and, if omitted, allows for a smooth transition from A (4) to B (5). Such an insertion was made probably by a pious scribe of Torah similar to the picture we have drawn of Sirach who wishes to emphasize that the one who is truly righteous will find guidance for his life in the meditation on Torah.[1]

Exegesis.[2] In this didactic wisdom psalm, the author has amplified an antithetical proverb which contrasts the divine retribution of the righteous with that of the wicked by means of an artistically constructed didactic poem consisting of two strophes, the first of which presents the activities and prosperity of the righteous, and the second of which concerns the misfortune and punishment of the wicked.

Strophe I pertains to the righteous man who does not, by means of his behavior, associate himself with the community of the wicked. In unit A, the three terms: הלך, עמד, and ישב, are used by the sage to describe metaphorically the behavior of the righteous man who does not associate with the wicked, and comprise the basic motor activities of the human body--"walking," "standing," and "sitting." The sagacious poet also demonstrates his flair for synonyms by referring to the

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[1] Unit D is closely paralleled by Jos. 1:8 which is part of the sapientially influenced redaction of the Deuteronomistic History. Thus, both may have been the result of the sapiential redaction by Torah sages.

[2] For a detailed analysis of the psalm, see J. Alberto Soggin, "Zum ersten Psalm," ThZ, XXIII (1967), 81-96.

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wicked by three nouns of comparison: רשעים, חטאים, and לצים, terms found in wisdom literature to denote those whose behavior is opposed to the mores and laws of the righteous society based on the just order of the cosmos.[1] Further, three synonyms are used also by the sage for describing the religio-ethical category of the wicked: "community" (עצה), "dominion" (דרך), and "assembly" (מושב). Thus the man who maintains his distance from the group of the wicked is deemed "Happy," a term denoting in wisdom literature a congratulatory remark made by an observer as well as the state of blessing into which the decorum of the righteous man has led him.

The poet then proceeds in unit B to illustrate the key proverb which speaks of the divine care for the righteous by the utilization of a parabolic saying based on the "Parable of the Fruitful Tree." Such a tree parable is common to the wisdom literatures of the ancient Near East, as may be seen in Amen-em-Opet, IV, Jer. 17:5-8, and Ezek. 29:1-5.[2] Such demonstrates that this specific type of parable is not limited to the symbols and motifs of the king, and thus dismisses the attempt of Engnell to regard the righteous man as the king, who in Near Eastern myth is the caretaker of the tree of life, and thus to classify the psalm as a royal psalm.[1] This parable is used to illustrate by means of a common sapiential metaphor the prosperity of the righteous man who is not a part of the community of the wicked. Finally the concluding observation in unit C points back to the righteous man who is congratulated in unit A, and concludes that he succeeds in everything that he seeks to accomplish and to do.

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[1] In addition to the frequently occurring רשעים, חטאים is found in wisdom literature: Prov. 1:3, 13:21, 23:17, and so is לצים: Prov. 1:22, 9:7, 8, 15:12, 13:1, 14:6, 24:9, etc.

[2] Amen-em-Opet metaphorically describes the "silent man" in a parabolic saying as a fruitful tree which prospers, whereas the "heated man" is presented as a desiccated tree which is eventually cut down. The close parallel in Jer. 17:5-8 has caused the suggestion to be made that Psalm 1 may have borrowed the parabolic saying from Jeremiah. However, we follow Hyatt's conclusion that the passage in Jeremiah "is more likely...to have been comprised by a part of the wisdom school...," especially since the parabolic saying is found in a larger, sapiential context (see vv. 9f.; "Jeremiah," IB, V [1956], 952).

The second strophe amplifies the second hemistich of the key proverb (E) by describing the destruction which seeks out the wicked. The first unit, C^1, forms a chiastic antithesis with C of Strophe I, and thus introduces us to the wicked by observing that whatever he seeks to accomplish does not succeed. The second unit, B^1, chiastically parallels B of Strophe I, and is likewise a parabolic saying paralleled in other wisdom literature (Job 21:18) and used to depict metaphorically the wicked as the chaff which is blown away by the wind, a primitive method of separating the grain from the chaff by pitching the grain into the air and allowing the currents of the wind to blow away the chaff. The third unit, A^1, is a concluding observation, also

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[1] Engnell, op. cit. This is not to deny the fact that the imagery and symbols of the king's role in overseeing the "tree of life" are frequently mentioned in A.N.E. literature and art (see Geo Widengren, The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion, Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, IV [Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1951]. However, there is simply no evidence that the "righteous man" in this psalm is a Near Eastern king, nor that this metaphor is limited to the royal association with the tree of life.

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in chiastic antithesis with its counterpart in the first strophe, and affirms that the wicked will not escape their destruction by being included among the religio-ethical category of the "righteous," and thus, in an example taken from Israelite jurisprudence, they are presented as those who are declared "guilty" (רשעים) in a lawcase, and not as צדיקים, "innocent" of charges levelled against them.

Finally, the key proverb (E) is a common one in wisdom literature, and it observes that Yahweh "knows," "is aware of," those who belong to the category of the righteous who live in accordance with the divinely instituted laws of social and cosmic order, whereas, the wicked, of whom he is also aware, are accorded the destruction of divine wrath.[1]

Psalm 34: "Concerning the Salvation of the Righteous"

Introduction. Scholarly opinion has been divided with respect to the genre to which the 34th psalm belongs. The psalm has been classified in three different categories: an individual psalm of thanksgiving, influenced by wisdom forms and content,[2] a combination

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[1] Psalm 1 has been placed in its position most probably to serve as an introduction to the psalter by a scribal redactor (cf. Prov. 1:1-7).

[2] Mitchell Dahood, Psalms, I, 205; and Gunkel and Begrich, Einleitung in die Psalmen, pp. 276-80. Gunkel refers to this Psalm as a Danklied, though he believes that there was a development toward a more sapiential character in this genre during the Post-Exile. H.-J. Kraus essentially agrees: "Ps 34 gehört zur Gattung der individuellen Danklieder...tendiert jedoch stark zur Form des Lehrgedichtes..." (Psalmen, I, 267).

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of an individual thanksgiving psalm (vv. 1-11) and a wisdom writing (vv. 12-22),[1] and as a wisdom psalm which contains certain characteristics of an individual song of thanksgiving.[2] Applying to our psalm the form critical knife, we find the following sapiential forms: the 'ashrê saying (v. 9),[3] positive admonitions with or without the motive clause introduced by kî (vv. 10, 14, 15), a series of proverbs (vv. 16-23), a rhetorical question (v. 13),[4] and the acrostic framework which in this case is alphabetic.[5] Sapiential language includes also the words למד (v. 12), יראת יהוה (v. 12), and the typical sapiential introduction to an instruction (לכו בנים שמעו לי). Wisdom themes include the typical one of retribution, the contrast of the wicked and the righteous, and the testing of the thesis in the arena of personal experience (vv. 5-7). Yet the determination of the

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[1] Schmidt states concerning both Ps. 25 and 34: "Auch darin gleichen die beiden Psalmen dass ihr Verfasser in die Form des Weisheitsspruches, die ihm offenbar geläufig ist, hinübergleitet. Hier geschieht das in 12 so ausdrücklich and betont, dass man sich nicht wundern würde, den zweiten Teil des Psalms im Buch der Proverbien oder in den Sprüchen des Jesus ben Sirach zu lesen " (Die Psalmen, HAT, XV [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1934], p. 64).

[2] Murphy, "A Consideration of the Classification 'Wisdom Psalms'," pp. 166f.

[3] Murphy, Introduction to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1965), p. 41.

[4] See Walter Baumgartner, "The Wisdom Literature," The Old Testament and Modern Study (London: Oxford University Press, 1951) p. 211.

[5] See H. Wiesmann, "Ps. 34 (Vulg. 33)," Bib, XVI (1935), 416. Examples of the acrostic in Hebrew literature include: Pss. 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145; Lam. 1-4, Ecclus. 51:13f., and from Mesopotamia "The Babylonian Theodicy."

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form of the psalm is complicated by the fact that it contains characteristics of an individual song of thanksgiving, especially in vv. 1-11: the characteristic introduction whereby the individual announces his intent to thank and praise the Lord (in the jussive and cohortative moods -- ישמעו, ישמחו, אברכה, ונרוממה) and invites the assembly to join in his worship (v. 4);[1] the typical reference to his own past distress (vv. 5b-7); the description of his deliverance by Yahweh who "heard (שמע, vv. 5, 16, 18)," "answered" (ענה, v. 5), and "delivered" (נצל, vv. 5, 18, 20; ישע, vv. 7, 19; and פדה, v. 23); the expressions of confidence and trust in the Lord (vv. 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23); the general inferences of salvation for all those who trust in Yahweh (especially vv. 11-23); and the key words תהלה("praise"), הלל("boast"), גדל("magnify"), and נרוממה ("exalt").[2] However, it is our view that the psalm should be classified as a wisdom psalm which gives an instruction concerning the psalm of thanksgiving and its theology (vv. 12-22), presents a model individual thanksgiving psalm for students to study (vv. 2-11), and is a development in terms of structure and content of the key proverb which occurs in v. 23.

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[1] Gunkel and Begrich refer to the introduction as hymnic in form (op. cit., p. 394), but Kraus has cogently argued that such a hymnic introduction is most common in the Danklied (Psalmen, I, xlvii).

[2] For a succinct analysis of the thanksgiving genre, see Kraus, Psalmen, I, p. xlvii.

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Translation and Structural Analysis.

Superscription

A Psalm of David, when he feigned madness before Abimelech, with the result that he drove him away, and he departed.[1]

Strophe I The Model Thanksgiving Psalm[2]

Introduction

א Let me bless the Lord at all times;
Continually his praise shall be in my mouth.
ב Let me boast in the Lord,
Let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
ג Magnify the Lord with me,
And let us extoll his name together.

Body

ד I sought the Lord and he answered me;
For he delivered me from all my terrors.
ה Look[3] to him and be radiant,[4]
And your faces will not be ashamed.[5]

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[1] The prose superscription is a rather odd one, for it connects the psalm with "David's feigning madness" in I Sam 21:14. Why such a note would be added is difficult to ascertain, but the redactional לדוד and the word טעם in v. 9 provided a connection with I Sam. 21:13, at least to one editor who wrote the superscription.

[2] The strophe has lost the waw line in the transmission of the psalm. If one were to allow for the missing line, then each strophe would consist of 11 lines.

[3] Read הַבִּיטוּ for הִבִּיטוּ with the LXX, Syriac, Vulgate (LXX and Heb.), and a number of Heb. MSS. Cf. BH^3, and Schmidt, op. cit., p. 1.

[4] Read וּנְהָרוּ for וְנָהָרוּ with the LXX, Syraic, Vulgate (LXX and Heb.), and 'A. Cf. BH^3.

[5] Read וּפְנֵיכֶם for וּפְנֵיהֶם once more with the LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate (LXX and Heb.). Cf. BH^3.

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ז This afflicted one called and the Lord heard.
And he delivered him from all his troubles.
ח The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him,
And he delivers them.
ט Taste and drink deeply[1] for the Lord is sweet,[2]
Happy is the man who seeks refuge in him.
י Fear the Lord, his saints,
For there is no want to those who fear him.
כ The young lions[3] are poor and hungry,
But the ones who seek the Lord will not lack any good.

Stroph II The Instruction Concerning the Thanksgiving

Introduction

ל Come, O sons, listen to me;
The fear of the Lord I shall teach you.
מ Who is the man who desires life,
Who loves days in order to see good?[4]

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[1] Dahood derives ראו from ירא ("to be fat, sated, drink deeply") which is cognate with רוה ("to be saturated, drink one's fill") (*op. cit.*, p. 206). Cf. Prov. 11:25, Ps. 91:16, Isa. 53:11, and Job 10:15. Also see G. R. Driver, "Problems in the Hebrew text of Proverbs," *Bib*, XXXII (1951), 173f. Though we accept Dahood's suggestion, the versions do not agree, for they support the meaning "to see".

[2] The translation of טוב as "sweet" is also suggested by Dahood (*op. cit.*) on the bases of Ugaritic *yn ṭb* ("sweet wine", UT, 1084:1), the Song of Solomon 1:2, and the Vulgate (*quonian suavis est Dominus*).

[3] BH3 makes note that some scholars have proposed כֹּפְרִים ("rebels," "liars"), while others have suggested כבירים ("mighty ones") for כפירים. The LXX has translated the word πλούσιοι while the Vulgate (LXX) has *divites*. The Targum has בני אריון along with the Vulgate (Heb.) which reads *leones*. We follow the MT and regard כפירים as a metaphor for the rich and powerful as it is used elsewhere: Pss. 35:17, 58:7, and Jer. 2:15.

[4] The syntax of 13b is rather difficult. In what appears as an effort to smooth out the syntax, the LXX reads τίς ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος ὁ θέλων ζωήν ἀγαπῶν ἡμέρας ἰδεῖν ἀγαθάς. Thus, ἀγαθάς is made to modify ἡμέρας. Both versions of the Vulgate follow the LXX. Couroyer has solved the problem by arguing that the plural ימים equals longevity and translates the hemistich: "Qui est celui qui

Body

נ Keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking deceit.
ס Turn from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.
ע The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,
And his ears toward their cry for help.[1]
פ The face of the Lord is against the doers of evil,
In order to cut off their remembrance from the earth.
צ They cry and the Lord hears;
And he delivers them from all their distress.
ק The Lord is near the contrite of heart,
And he saves the crushed in spirit.
ר The righteous man has many miseries,
But the Lord delivers him from all of them.
ש He keeps intact all his bones,
Not one of them is broken.
ת Evil will kill the wicked men,
And the ones hating the righteous will be held guilty.

Central Proverb

The Lord redeems the soul of his servants;
And all those who trust in him will not be held guilty.

Once more we find a wisdom psalm which is structured around a proverb, in this case a synonymous, two hemistich saying found in v. 23, which is independent of the alphabetic acrostic, a fact that indicates that the proverb is the central saying of the psalm.[2] The first strophe takes the form of an individual thanksgiving, though

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désire la vie, qui aimerait une existence où l'on voie le bonheur " ("Idéal sapiential en Égypte et en Israel," RB, LVII [1950], 175).

[1] According to Schmidt, op. cit., and BH^3, vv. 16 and 17 should be transposed, since צעקו in v. 18 should refer to the righteous of v. 16, not the "doers of evil" in v. 17. Such is an acceptable change, since in a number of acrostics פ precedes ע (Lam. 2, 3, 4).

[2] Cf. Prov. 28:18, 25, 29:25, 30:10; Sir. 33:1, 34:13f.

in vv. 8-11 it begins to make the transition to sapiential forms. It is our opinion that the thanksgiving strophe serves as a model for instructing young scribal novitiates in the ideology and literary form of the thanksgiving which is affirmed as part of the procedure by which redemption of the Lord is obtained: the process of the lament-thanksgiving cycle. The lament is alluded to in the following: "I sought the Lord and he answered me," and "This afflicted one called and the Lord heard, and he delivered him from all his troubles."[1] The second strophe is a sapiential instruction which develops in detail the content of the key proverb, especially in the proverbial series in vv. 16-22, while the admonitions in vv. 14-15 admonish the sagacious students to appropriate the general decorum of the ones who are God-fearers, thus picking up on the "fear of God" motif which was introduced in the proverbial ending (vv. 8-11) of Strophe I. Therefore those who are "God-fearers" may depend upon the redemption of the deity in times of distress. The thesis of the proverb which concerns Yahweh's redemption of the pious is restated in the second hemistich of verses 5 and 7 of Strophe I and vv. 18 and 20 of Strophe II.

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[1] We have repeatedly asserted that the main cultic action for the wise was prayer, especially as seen within the framework of the lament-thanksgiving cycle. Thus we do not find it unusual to suggest that vv. 2-11 appear as a model thanksgiving psalm. Sirach himself wrote at least one thanksgiving psalm in 51:1-12. Also see our discussion of Job in Chapter IV.

Key words in the psalm appear to be the synonyms for redemption: פדה, חלץ, נצל, and ישע, while the following serve as mots crochets: Yahweh (found in almost every line), טוב (vv. 11, 13, and 15), יראת יהוה (vv. 8, 10, and 12), רע (vv. 14, 15, 17, 20, and 22), and צדיק (vv. 16, 20, and 22).

Exegesis. Strophe I is presented primarily in the form of an individual song of thanksgiving, though wisdom forms begin to appear in vv. 8-11. Verse 2 initiates the thank offering which apparently is the result of a "vow" made by the psalmist during his period of distress.[1] The psalmist sets forth his praise in the midst of the assembly, and intends his praise and his deliverance by Yahweh to serve as an example for the ענוים[2] who are to be encouraged and to

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[1] Kraus, op. cit., p. 268. Cf. "The Babylonian Theodicy," ANET, p. 601f.

[2] A number of studies have been made concerning the ענוים (עני) in laments and songs of thanksgiving along with their opponents, the פעלי עון. Mowinckel has argued that the פעלי עון were magicians who inflicted upon the ענוים demonic forces (Psalmenstudien I, reprint (Amsterdam: Schippers, 1961). H. Schmidt has regarded the laments as the prayers of the oppressed who have been accused by their enemies of breaking the law and must have their cases decided by Yahweh in the sanctuary (Das Gebet der Angeklagten im Alten Testament, BZAW, XLIX (Giessen : A. Töpelmann, 1928). Birkeland had accepted Mowinckel's ideas in his 'ani und 'anaw in den Psalmen (Videnskapsselkapets Skrifter II. Hist.-Filos. Klasse 1932, no. 4, 1933), though in his later work appearing the same year, he discarded Mowinckel's thesis for one which interpreted the "enemies" as "foreigners" and the "I" of psalms as a king, army commander, high priest, or Jewish governor (Der Feinde des Individuums in der israelitischen Psalmenliteratur (Oslo: I Kommisjon hos J. Dybwad, 1933). Finally, J. van der Ploeg has considered the 'ānī as the economically poor, a term which came to be used along with the term 'ānāw to refer to the humble in a religious sense, since they were not as likely to be guilty of pride as were the rich ("Les pauvres d'Israel et leur pieté," OTS, VII [1950], 236-70). We follow van der Ploeg in regarding the

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take heart (v. 3). In v. 4 he invites the assembly to participate in his exaltation of Yahweh (נרוממה, גדלו). Verses 5-7 include the Bekenntnis[1] which is typical in thanksgiving psalms and which relates the past experience of distress (מגורה, צרה) which had encompassed the psalmist, and then speaks of his seeking of Yahweh (דרש, קרא) and Yahweh's answer (ענה) and deliverance (ישע, נצל). דרש (vv. 5, 11) in cultic contexts refers to the quest for admission to the sanctuary (cf. Amos 5:4f.)[2] whereby the individual in distress hoped for a Heilsorakel (ענה)[3] from a cultic official assuring the lamenter of Yahweh's imminent deliverance (ישע, נצל). Upon the basis of his own experience, the psalmist then invites the assembly, especially other ענוים, to look to his deliverance as a positive example of Yahweh's salvation, and, thereby, to gain confidence and hope (v. 6).

The psalmist seeks to emphasize the surety of Yahweh's salvation of the pious by drawing from proverbial literature a number of sayings,

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term as primarily a religious one for the humble, for only they will debase themselves to achieve the proper spirit for forgiveness.

[1] Gunkel, Die Psalmen, p. 142.

[2] For a complete discussion, see Westermann, "Die Begriffe für Fragen und Suchen im Alten Testament," pp. 2-30. Also cf. Ps. 73:17 and Ludlul bel Nēmeqi.

[3] See Joachim Begrich, "Das priesterliche Heilsorakel," ZAW, LII (1934), 81-92. For examples of the Heilsorakel, see Lam. 3:56f. and especially II Isaiah.

the content of which affirms the saving power of God. In vv. 8 and 11 we have didactic proverbs. Verse 8 draws upon the old exodus and conquest traditions involving the מלאך יהוה who aided and guided Israel during her early experiences.[1] In the present context, the term is used metaphorically to refer to Yahweh's protection of the pious (יראים), and, in fact, may be a term for Yahweh himself due to the pronominal suffix attached to יראים which seems to point back to the מלאך (cf. Gen. 16:13; Jud. 13:22). Verse 8 has the first of four occurrences of the word ירא which refers to the obedience and trust of the pious in the absolute authority of Yahweh, the creator who has established the just orders for pious living. Those who observe this rule of orders and follow the direction of the admonitions and commands based upon it will receive the reward of חיים for themselves and their community.[2] Verses 9 and 10 are admonitions (Mahnsprüche) given in the typical imperative form (יראו, טעמו), and v. 9b also inserts an 'ashrê form. The assembly is

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[1] Cf. Ex. 14:19, Jos. 5:14. The term מלאך יהוה came to be used metaphorically not only to refer to the protection of the pious (Ps. 91:11), but also to the destruction of the wicked (Ps. 35:5f.). For a complete discussion, see W. Baumgartner, "Zum Problem des Jahwe-Engels," Zum Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), pp. 240-47).

[2] Bauer-Kayatz, Einführung in die alttestamentliche Weisheit, pp. 31f. S. Plath remarks concerning יראת יהוה: Es handelt sich um die Benennung einer noch näher zu bestimmenden geschlossenen Menschengruppe als 'Jahwefürchtige' in der Bedeutung der Jahvetreuen und Gerechten im Unterschied zu den Gottlosen und Bösewichten." He indicates that in wisdom the term also implies Lebensglück, the result of following wisdom (Prov. 10:27, 14:27, etc.). (Furcht Gottes. [Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1962], pp. 54f.).

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addressed, vocatively, as the קדשיו, the only occurrence in the Old Testament in which "saints" is used as a noun to which a genitive is joined and which refers to the human assembly of worshippers.[1] The strophe closes with the proverbial contrast of the כפירים, probably a metaphor for the rich and powerful who suffer want, and the pious (דרשי) who have every good thing. טוב in wisdom literature, according to von Rad, is to be regarded as a beneficent "power," a life-giving force which creates "well-being" and "life" for the wise righteous in terms of possessions, fortune, name, children, longevity, etc., for both him and the community in which he lives. Thus טוב is a "lebens-und gemeinschaftsfördernden Macht."[2]

Strophe II is an instruction concerning the redemption by Yahweh of the "God-fearers" and contains the introduction (v. 12), the body which has a rhetorical question (v. 13) and admonitions (vv. 14-15), and the conclusion which consists of proverbs (vv. 16-22). In v. 12, one finds the typical sapiential introduction (cf. Prov. 1:8, 2:1, etc.) in which the sage announces he is about to instruct his students in the יראת יהוה. Beginning with the rhetorical question, the wise man places in interrogative form the basic concerns of the wise "who desire life (חיים) and to experience the good (טוב)."

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[1] See M. Noth, "The Holy Ones of the Most High," The Laws in the Pentateuch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 215f. Noth indicates that with the exception of Ps. 34, the O.T. usages refer to divine beings. Also see Coppens, "Les saints dans le Psautier," ETL, XXXIX (1963), 485-500.

[2] Weisheit in Israel, p. 106. Cf. Prov. 13:21, Ecc. 2:3.

Bauer-Kayatz has defined "life" in wisdom as "langes, ruhiges, gesichtertes Leben ohne Mangel und Störung."[1] The answer to the question is given by the sage in vv. 14-15 in terms of two admonitions. One who desires "life" and the experience of "good" must know how to control his tongue (Prov. 13:3), one of the primary concerns of the wise who regarded proper speech as the key characteristic of the "silent man."[2] In a more general way, the admonition of v. 15 states the counsel of the entire wisdom ideology: "turn from evil (Prov. 3:7, 13:19) and do good" (Ps. 37:3, 27; Prov. 13:21). The actions and attitudes of the wise aid in creating the life-producing sphere (שלום) of order (צדקה), whereas the actions and behavior of the wicked lead to the destruction of this sphere for himself and for his community. Thus, the removal of the wicked from the just society was necessitated for the community to survive (Prov. 2:21-22, 10:30, Ps. 37:9, 10, 12, 13, 20, 22).

The remainder of the strophe consists of a series of proverbs which contrast the righteous and the wicked (cf. Prov. 10-15).[3]

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[1] Bauer-Kayatz, op. cit., p. 33. Cf. Prov. 10:27, 14:26. A similar concern is expressed in Amen-em-Opet 4:1f. "Thou wilt find my words a storehouse of life and thy body will prosper upon the earth." Couroyer has pointed to an Egyptian tomb inscription which parallels 13a: "O tout (homme) aimat la vie, desirant une existence heureuse." According to him, the statement exactly parallels 13a except for the ימים (op. cit., p. 178).

[2] Cf, e.g. Amen-em-Opet, chp. III.

[3] See Schmid, Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit, p. 161, and Noth, "The Laws in the Pentateuch," The Laws in the Pentateuch, p. 102, note 238.

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The righteous man, by practicing צדקה, is one who is able to integrate himself within the salvific order of righteousness established by Yahweh, and is able to create life for the community in which he lives,[1] and if in distress, may turn to the deity for his redemption. By contrast the wicked are those whose behavior leads not only to a disregard of the orders of life but to the dissolution of order, and consequently they must be removed from the community by the retributive action of the deity, destroyed to the point of utter extinction, so that even their "remembrance" will be obliterated, thus denying to the wicked even this small semblance of immortality: להכרית מארץ
זכרם.[2]

Finally, in v. 23, the key proverb around which the entire psalm has been developed is presented which emphasizes the main thesis of both strophes: Yahweh's redemption of the pious.

Psalm 37: "An Instruction Concerning the Righteous and the Wicked"

Introduction. Psalm 37 is a third example of a Proverb Psalm, for though it is clothed in the sapiential dress of an instruction, the instruction is built around a repeated proverb found in certain key positions throughout the psalm. The categorization of this

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[1] Bauer-Kayatz, op. cit., pp. 18f. She refers to such acts as Gemeinschaftstreu and Rechtverhalten.

[2] Such an expression is similar to Ps. 37 (throughout), Prov. 15:23, 25:11, and Sir. 14:20.

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psalm as a wisdom composition is easily proven.[1] The entire psalm is an instruction consisting of admonitions, both positive and negative, often coupled with motive clauses introduced by kî (vv. 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, 8 and 9, 27 and 28a, 34, 37 and 38), a "better" saying (v. 16), different types of didactic proverbs scattered throughout the psalm and the acrostic arrangement.[2] Wisdom language includes the terms חכמה (v. 30), עת רעה and עת צרה (v. 19, v. 39), עשה טוב (vv. 3, 27), סור מרע (v. 27), ישר (vv. 14, 37) תורת אליהיו (v. 31), משפט (vv. 6, 28, 30, 33), צדק (vv. 6, 12, 16, 17, 21, 25, 29, 30, 32, 39), רשע (vv. 10, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 28, 32, 34, 35, 38, 40), and לשון (v. 30). Typical wisdom themes include the central emphasis of the psalm upon the principle of retribution justly meted out to the righteous and the wicked, the contrast of the behavior of the righteous man and the wicked man, correct speech, and a late wisdom theme of the guidance of the pious wise by the Torah of Yahweh (v. 31). The artistically built structure of the poem is fashioned in the same way that other proverb psalms have been built:

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[1] The classification of this psalm as a wisdom psalm has been almost unanimously accepted by the major wisdom and psalmodic scholars (see our introduction to this chapter).

[2] Holm-Nielsen remarks concerning the psalm's acrostic arrangement: "The alphabetic structure in this psalm consists of periods of two lines, each of two hemistichs, which, again, are introduced by a new letter, so that the whole psalm gets twice as many lines as the number of letters in the alphabet. Even though this is not carried through with full consistency, it seems that the poet has endeavored to make each letter period constitute an independent whole also as determined from the contents just as he obviously aims at a sentence connexion between the two lines in each period " (The Importance of Late Jewish Psalmody for the Understanding of Old Testament Psalmodic Tradition," StTh, XIV [1960], 42).

the development of structure and content around a central proverb (vv. 9, 22, 28b and 29a, 34b, and 38b).

Translation and Structural Analysis.

A. Strophe I: "Be not Envious of the Evil-Doers"

Do not anger yourselves on account of the wicked,
א Nor be envious of the evil-doers,
For they will quickly wither as grass,
And as green herbage they shall droop.

Trust in the Lord and do good;
ב Inhabit the land and enjoy security.
Take delight in the Lord,
And he will give to you the requests of your heart.

Turn your way unto the Lord;
ג Trust in him and he will act.
He will bring forth your innocence as the light,
And your justice as the noontime.

Be silent before the Lord,
ד And wait longingly for him.
Do not anger yourselves on account of the success of his way,
On account of the man who commits wicked deeds.

ה Refrain from anger and leave behind wrath;
Do not anger yourselves, for it leads only to evil.

Central Proverb

(For) the wicked will be cut off,
But the ones who wait for the Lord will possess the land.

Expanded Observation concerning the Proverb

Yet a little while and the wicked will be no more,
ו You will look attentively upon his place, but he will not be there.
But the meek shall inherit the land,
And will be delighted by abundant well-being.

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B. Strophe II: Concerning the Righteous and the Wicked

The evil one plots against the righteous,
ז And grinds his teeth against him.
My Lord laughs at him,
For he sees that his day is approaching.

The wicked draw the sword and bend their bow,
In order to bring down the afflicted and needy (to slay the
ח upright).[1]
Their sword will enter their own heart,
And their bows will be broken.

Better is the little which the righteous man possesses,
ט Than the wealth of many wicked,
For the arms of the wicked will be broken,
But the Lord sustains the righteous.

The Lord knows the days of the innocent,
י And their inheritance will be forever.
They will not be ashamed in an evil time,
And in the days of famine they will be satiated.

Surely the wicked shall perish,
כ For the enemies are like the most precious of pastures.
They vanish in smoke, they vanish.

ל The wicked one borrows but does not repay,
But the righteous man is generous and gives.

Central Proverb

(For) his blessed ones will inherit the land,
But his accursed ones will be cut off.

From the Lord are the steps of a man;
They are established, for he takes delight in his way.
מ Whenever he should fall, he will not be cast down,
For the Lord sustains his hand.

Expanded Observation Concerning the Central Proverb

נ I have been a lad, and now I am old,

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[1] BH^3 suggests deleting the words in parentheses.

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But I have never seen the righteous abandoned nor his children
begging for bread.
All the day he is generous and lending,
And his seed will become a blessing.

C. Strophe III: Concerning the Righteous and the Wicked

Depart from evil and do good,
ס And dwell forever,
For the Lord loves justice,
And will not abandon his pious ones.

ע They are preserved forever.

Central Proverb

(But) the seed of the wicked is cut off,[1]
The righteous will inherit the land.

And they will dwell upon it forever.

The mouth of the righteous expresses wisdom,
And his tongue speaks justice.
פ The torah of his God is in his heart;
His steps will not be moved.

The evil one observes the righteous,
And seeks to kill him.
צ But the Lord will not abandon him into his hand,
And he shall not pronounce him guilty when he is tried.

ק Wait for the Lord and keep his way,

Central Proverb Paraphrased

So that he may exalt you to possess the land,
When the wicked are cut off you will observe it.

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[1] BH^3 suggests נשמדו ("are destroyed"). Cf. LXX.

Expanded Observation concerning the Proverb

I have seen a ruthless,[1] wicked man,
ר Spreading himself out like a luxurious tree.[2]
And he passed along,[3] and behold he was no more;
I searched for him, but he was not found.

D. Conclusion to the Instruction

Observe the blameless and behold the righteous,
ש For there is a future to the man of peace.
But transgressors shall be destroyed altogether;

Central Proverb

The future of the wicked will be cut off.

The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord;
He is their refuge in a time of distress.
ת He helps them and delivers them.
He delivers them from the evil ones,
And saves them, for they take refuge in him.

While the aesthetic appeal of the psalm is somewhat hampered by the strictures of the acrostic arrangement, one still discovers the structure of the psalm to be demonstrative of artistic ability on behalf of the wise psalmist. As we have indicated, the structure and content of the psalm is developed around a central proverb which is restated in several key places:

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[1] LXX reads ὑπερυψούμενον ("exalting himself"). BH^3 notes that עליץ ("exaltant") and עלין ("proud") have been suggested by some scholars.

[2] The LXX reads καὶ ἐπαιρόμενον ("rise up") ὡς τὰς κέδρους τοῦ Λιβάνου. Thus one might read מתעלה כארז (ארזי) הלבנון, or מתעדן ("luxuriant"), or מתעבה ("thick").

[3] One should read ואעבר (cf. LXX, Jerome, S): "and I passed by."

v. 9 כי מרעים יכרתון וקוי יהוה המה יירשו־ארץ
v. 22 כי מברכין יירשו הארץ ומקלליו יכרתו
v. 28b and v. 29a צדיקים יירשו ארץ וזרע רשעים נכרת
v. 34b וירוממך לרשתארץ בהכרת רשעים תראה
v. 38b [1]אחרית רשעים נכרתה

In addition to the key proverb which occurs in each of the four major divisions: A, B, C, and D, we also find at the end of each of the three major strophes (A, B, C), an expanded observation of the proverb which points to personal observation of the destruction of the wicked:[2]

vv. 10-11 Yet a little while and the wicked will be no more,
You will look attentively (התבוננת) upon his place,
but he will not be there.
But the meek shall inherit the land,
And will be delighted by abundant well-being.

vv. 25-26 I have been a lad, and now I am old,
But I have never seen (ראיתי) the righteous
abandoned nor his children begging for bread.
All the day he is generous and lending,
And his seed will become a blessing.

vv. 35-36 I have seen (ראיתי) a ruthless, wicked man,
Spreading himself out like a luxurious tree.
And he passed along, and behold he was no more;
I searched for him, but he was not found.

Thus these personal experiences of the blessing of the righteous and destruction of the wicked serve to verify the truth of the central proverb, and, at the same time, are structurally conceived as dividers between the major strophes, for each one occurs at the end of a major strophe.

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[1] Crenshaw points to Meri-ka-Re, Amen-em-het, and Koheleth as prime examples of the autobiographical style in wisdom literature (op. cit., p. 206).

[2] This repeated proverb seems to have been a common one in Israelite sapiential sources, since it is found almost word for word in Prov. 2:21a, 22a. Parts of the proverb also occur in vv. 3, 11, and 27.

Key words in addition to those repeated in the central proverb are רשע and צדיק, again emphasizing the major theme of the psalms: the contrast between the wicked and the righteous.

Strophe I consists of five admonitions followed by the central proverb and the expanded observation. The strophe is primarily concerned with admonishments to the righteous to avoid being like the wicked by becoming angry and losing control of their passions, for such characterizes the behavior of the wicked who soon perish. The inclusion for this strophe is a synonym for the wicked: מרעים which occurs in v. 1 and v. 9. Words serving as *mots crochets* are אל תתחר (vv. 1, 7, and 8), and התענג (vv. 4, 11).

The second strophe contrasts the behavior and fate of the righteous and wicked in proverbial form. ראה serves as an inclusion for the strophe, while *mots crochets* are רשע, צדיק, and תשברנה.

Strophe III is likewise a contrast of the behavior and fortune of the wicked with those of the righteous, and consists of admonitions, proverbial sayings, and the first person observation of the teacher. The two admonitions serve as the inclusion for the strophic unit, while רשע, משפט, and צדיק are *mots crochets*.

Finally, vv. 37-40 are a conclusion to the instruction, and serve primarily as a means for the completion of the alphabetic acrostic. The form is an instruction followed by an extended series of motivations and assertions concerning the salvation of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked. Mots crochets include אחרית, יהוה, ישב, and רשעים (and its synonyms).

Exegesis. This instruction serves as a prime example of the principle of retribution, for it repeatedly asserts that the righteous will eventually be rewarded, whereas the wicked will be destroyed. And the overseer of this system of just retribution, of course, is Yahweh. The principle of retribution involved the process of Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang, that is, the process by which certain behavior led to either well-being or misfortune, and thus we find our sage equally concerned with the delineation of the characteristics of sagacious behavior as contrasted to the foolish and wicked actions of the evil ones.[1]

The production of the instruction by the sage seems to be motivated by the perplexion of his students over the problem of the prosperity of the wicked who succeed even in their persecution of the righteous.[2] Such a concern has so enraged the righteous audience that their trust in Yahweh as the one who maintains a just order hangs

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[1] Such a principle was derivative of wisdom thought which saw as its primary purpose "der Gedanke an die Beglückung und Befriedigung des Menschen " (Fichtner, Die altorientalische Weisheit, p. 60).

[2] Stamm states concerning this wrestling with the problem of evil: "Das Problem, über welches der Psalmist Belehrung gibt, ist die Beobachtung, dass so vielen Gottlosen alles wohl gerät (7), und dass sie ohne Hemmungen ihre Macht gegenüber den Frommen ausüben können " (Das Leiden des Unschuldigen in Babylon und Israel [Zürich: Zwingliverlag, 1946], p. 44). For a complete discussion of the questioning of the dogma of theodicy, see J. L. Crenshaw, "Popular Questioning of the Justice of God," pp. 381-95. G. von Rad's discussion of the various approaches to the problem is cogently and succinctly presented (Weisheit in Israel, pp. 251f.).

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precariously near the chasm of doubt. In fact, such impatience and anger aroused within the breast of the righteous is leading them to develop behavior that is characteristic of the wicked, and, as such, is extremely dangerous. Thus the sage repeatedly requests his hearers to still their rage (vv. 1, 7; 8). If they maintain their trust in the justice of Yahweh, so our sage argues, they will continue to reside within the spheres of "life" and "well-being," figuratively expressed in the repeated image of "possessing" or "inheriting the land" (נחלה).[1] And, in addition, they will see the eventual destruction of the wicked who, along with their descendants, will be "cut off" from success, land, and life.

The sage develops his arguments for the validity of the principle of retribution and the dogma of theodicy by centering upon two major ideas found within the structure of wisdom thought: the idea of the "future" and the concept of "time." One of the key words in the instruction is the word אחרית, occurring in vv. 37-38, and capable of several nuances. One idea is that of "posterity," as seen

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[1] The possession of the land is a concept thoroughly rooted in Israelite tradition (Ps. 25:13, Isa. 57:13, 60:21, 65:39). But, of course, the idea of the conquest tradition and the _heilsgeschichtliche_ נחלה is not included within the wisdom tradition until Sirach and especially the Wisdom of Solomon. Unless we give an extremely late date to this psalm, such a concept does not seem to be a part of the sage's thinking, but rather he uses the idea of נחלה as the "inheritance" of the familial land by the family's sons throughout the generations. Thus the righteous are guaranteed the ability to keep their land within the family forever, whereas the wicked will eventually loose their land. נחלה to our sage is then a sociological term of familial land ownership. P. A. Munch has seen the expression as an indication of a class struggle between the rich landowners (רשעים) and the oppressed small landowners (ענוים). Thus he states: "Die

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in Ps. 109:13, while another is that of the final result of a course of action (Prov. 14:12). However, the most important nuance is that of the "future" of a man which includes every element of one's hopes for his future: logevity, descendants, success, prosperity, well-being, etc. Therefore the sage seizes upon this term to affirm his belief that the wicked, in contrast to the righteous, have no security residing within their אחרית, for they, their descendants, and their possession of the land "will be cut off."

In addition, the sage grasps the argument of "time" to support his faith in the principle of retribution and the justice of God. In the wisdom tradition, there is the idea of an "evil time" in which those who are foolish and wicked will be utterly decimated, while the wise-righteous may hope for the salvation of the deity (cf. Sirach 39:12f.). Thus our sage argues that during an "evil time" (עת רעה) the righteous will not be put to shame, for the Lord serves as their refuge in the "time of trouble," implying that catastrophic times will sweep away the wicked in the flooding waters of destruction. In addition, he argues that the "time" of the wicked man's success is brief (עוד מעט, v. 10), and that "his day is coming" (יבא יומו V. 13), which in wisdom sources refer to the time when the consummate result of an evil man's actions will be requited; and he will be destroyed by an "untimely death" (Prov. 21:4, 16:4, Job 20:28, Ecc. 7:17).[1]

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armen Kleinbauern sollen wieder das Ackerland zu eigen haben." ("Das Problem des Reichtums in den Psalmen 37, 49, 73," ZAW, LV [1937], 36f.).

[1] Fichtner indicates that the "evil day" (Prov. 16:4) and the

Thus our sage places himself squarely in the category of the pious wise who support, never question, the traditional dogmas of wisdom literature, even to the extent of arguing that he had "never seen the children of the righteous begging for bread," prompting us to wonder if our wise psalmist were blind as well as old!

Psalm 73: "A Reflection on the Problem of Theodicy"

Introduction. In regard to content, Psalm 73 has generally been recognized to be a Joban psalm,[1] in that the intense questioning of the justice of God and the related dogma of retribution is of critical concern to the theological thrust of the psalm. Like the Joban dialogues, the psalm makes use of formal elements and themes of the lament, but the inner doubts and the theological questioning of the psalmist are openly displayed for accessible scrutiny. Furthermore our psalm is more of an intense reflection over and questioning of the theological presuppositions of the lament, thus pointing to the conclusion that the psalm should best be seen as a product of the wisdom circles, and perhaps is best considered among the category of Gese's "Paradigm of the Answered Lament."[2] Such a sapiential

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"day of wrath" (Prov. 11:4, Job 21:30) do not refer to an apocalyptic day of judgment, "sondern um von Jahve immer wieder einmal gesandte innerzeitlich und innerweltliche Unglückstage, die dem Frevler zum Verderben werden, aber dem Gerechten nichts anhaben können " (op. cit., p. 65).

[1] The Psalm has been classified as a thanksgiving (Schmidt, op. cit., p. 140) a didactic psalm (Gunkel, Die Psalmen, p. 312), and as a mixture of both genres (Kraus, Psalmen, p. 504).

[2] Lehre und Wirklichkeit.

classification is derived from the fact that the closest parallels to the psalm from ancient Near Eastern literature, with the exception of Job, are the Sumerian "A Man and His God," and the Akkadian "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom," both of which are reflective poems dealing with the theological and existential torment of a just sufferer who persistently seeks and eventually discovers his redemption through the battered and worn cultic response of the lament.[1]

With respect to sapiential forms occurring in our psalm, we find a maxim (v. 1), the autobiographical style,[2] and the disputative quotation of the wicked in v. 11.[3] Sapiential vocabulary includes the terms בין (v. 17), עצה (v. 24), ישר (v. 1), תוכחת (v. 14), אחרית (v. 17), רשעים (vv. 3, 12), גאוה (v. 6), and הוללים (v. 3). Wisdom themes include the above mentioned questioning of the justice of God, retribution, the contrast of the wicked and the righteous, and the theological answer to the problem of theodicy which is centered in the idea of "nearness to God," or theological existence (cf. Job).

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[1] See our discussion in Chapter III.

[2] The repetition of the pronoun אני for emphasis and as a parenthetic "as for me" is paralleled by Koheleth.

[3] Crenshaw, "The Problem of Theodicy in Sirach," pp. 48f.

Translation and Structural Analysis.

Superscription

A Psalm of Asaph

Introductory Maxim

Surely El is good to the upright,[1]
Elohim to the pure in heart.

Strophe I: The Prosperity of the Arrogant Wicked

But as for me, my feet had almost turned aside,[2]
My steps[3] had almost slipped.
For I was jealous of the proud,
When I perceived the well-being of the wicked.
For they have no pangs,
Their bodies are sound and healthy,
They do not participate in human toil,
Nor are they stricken like other men.
Therefore pride is their necklace,
And violence clothes them as their garment.
Their eyes swell from fatness,
The conceits of their heart flow forth.
They mock and speak with evil,
They speak oppression as if from on high.
They place their mouths in the heavens,
And their tongue struts upon the earth.
Therefore bread satiates their hunger,[4]
And plentiful waters are drunk by them.

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[1] Reading לישר אל for MT לישראל , a suggested example of the improper joining of two separate words. For similar sayings, see Prov. 2:7-8, 3:13, 34, 10:3, 29.

[2] Following the Qere נטיו .

[3] אשרי is figurative for "mode of life," and is a frequent metaphor in wisdom language (Job 23:11, 31:7; Prov. 14:15; Ps. 37:31).

[4] Reading ישב עמו לחם for MT ישב עמוהלם.

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And they say, "How can God know"?
And, "Is there knowledge in the Most High"?
Behold, these are the wicked;
Forever at ease, they increase their wealth.

Strophe II: The Destruction of the Wicked

Surely it has been in vain that I have kept my heart pure,
For I have washed my hands in innocence.
Because I was stricken all the day,
And my chastisement came each morning.
If I had said, "I will speak concerning this,"
Then I would have been a deceiver to the generation of thy sons.
And I wished to reflect in order to understand this,
Yet it was a wearisome task to my eyes.
Until I went to the sanctuary of God,
Then I perceived their end.
Surely you have placed them in slippery places;
You cause them to fall to their destruction.
How they are destroyed in a moment,
Utterly swept away by terrors,
Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord,
Like a hazy image when one awakes.

Strophe III: "The Nearness of God"

When my heart was bitter,
And my emotions had been spent,
I was stupid, for I did not understand.
I was like a brutish animal with you.
But I am continually with you.
You have taken my right hand.
With your counsel you lead me,
And you have me follow after glory.
Who is mine in the heavens but you?
And I take no delight on earth.
My flesh and my eyes may be weak,
But the rock of my heart and my portion is God forever.

Conclusion

For behold, those who are far from you will perish;
You destroy everyone who is unfaithful to you.
But as for me, my welfare is the nearness of God.
I have made my refuge the Lord God,
In order to recount all of your works.

The sagacious poet has utilized a synonymous maxim from the wisdom tradition in v. 1 as the basis for the structure and content of his reflection on the lament. The vocabulary of the maxim is repeated in strategic places throughout the following strophes, and the affirmation of the justice of God in the saying is the pivotal theological concern of the entire psalm.

The content of Strophe I involves the radical questioning of the affirmation of the maxim with respect to the justice of God, a questioning issuing forth from the sage's observation of the prosperity of the arrogant and blasphemous wicked. The strophe is initiated by first person pronouns and verbs (vv. 2-3), and then makes the transition (v. 4) to the third person description of the wicked. The religio-ethical category of the רשעים serves as an inclusion (vv. 3, 12), while the strophe is terminologically linked to the maxim by the repetition of the key words אל and אך in v. 11.

The transition to Strophe II is indicated by the shift from the third person description of the wicked to the first person reflections of the sage who decries the suffering by which he has been tormented even though he had been righteous. He then proceeds to the second person address of the deity, and finally to the third person description once more of the wicked. The language of the introductory maxim is repeated in the terms אך (vv. 13, 18, 19) and לבב (v. 13). Verse 13 disputes momentarily the theology of the maxim, for the sage bemoans his own suffering which has come in spite

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of his "clean heart." אך also serves as an inclusion for the demarcation of this second strophe.

Once more the transition to the third strophe is noticed in the change to the first person pronouns and verbs, though finally the sage proceeds to the second person in addressing the deity. The repetition of the words לבב (vv. 21, 26) and אלהים (v. 26) links this strophe with the language of the maxim. The mot crochet of this strophe is עמך (vv. 22, 23, 25), while לבב serves as an inclusion.

Finally, the conclusion which reaffirms the theology of the maxim, but gives it a new insight, parallels the language of the maxim in regards to the following clauses which, in addition, serve as the inclusion for the demarcation of the entire psalm:

Maxim	טוב לישר אל
Conclusion	אלהים לי טוב

In addition אני serves as an inclusion for the entire psalm (vv. 2, 28), and the words אך and לבב are the mots crochets of the complete poem.

Exegesis. Psalm 73 is a sapiential reflection concerning the Israelite dogmas of the justice of God and retribution which are the foundation blocks of sapiential as well as penitential theology. Like the just sufferer in "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom," our psalmist rigorously questions, anguishedly doubts, and almost blasphemously denies the justice of God and the related principle of retribution. His faith was shaken not only because of his observation that the arrogant wicked prospered and were at ease, but also because of the prodding of the pain of his own intense suffering, suffering which was supposedly undeserved by the righteous.[1]

In the first strophe, the sage admits he has doubted the justice of God when he observed the welfare of the wicked whose prosperity and well-being seemed to increase in spite of their oppression, violence, promethean pride, and defiant, mocking blasphemy of the knowledge and power of God.[2]

The sage then speaks with bitterness of his own suffering in spite of his self-proclaimed innocence, an experience which almost led to the brink of angry blasphemy hurled against God.[3] Incapable however of uttering his thoughts aloud, the sage tries intellectually to grasp why he has suffered and the wicked apparently were at ease, but finally concludes that such an intellectual task proved to be

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[1] Such an observation of the prosperity of the wicked and the misfortune of the righteous led Koheleth to abandon the twin concepts of theodicy and retribution. While Koheleth never mentions that he suffered, personal suffering, of course, is what precipitated the crisis of Job.

[2] The fact of the sage's acquaintance with mythological texts is derived from his description of the wicked in v. 9 which parallels UT 52, 60f., and 67, II, 2-3 (Cf. H. Ringgren, "Einige Bemerkungen zum 73. Psalm," VT, III [1953], 265-72.

[3] The ritual of "washing one's hands in innocence" occurred in juridical proceedings by which one proved his innocence, as well as in the cultic sphere when one wished to demonstrate symbolically his innocence to the deity (cf., e.g. Dt. 21:6, and our discussion of the Dialogues of Job).

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"wearisome toil."[1] He finally resorts to the sanctuary of God[2] in his despair, and, presumably on the basis of a revelatory message,[3] or even a theophanic experience,[4] he is led to conclude that the "fate" of the wicked eventually will overtake them, for suddenly, without warning, they will be decimated by the God they had accused of being impotent.

A further theological point is made in the third strophe concerning the justice of God which supports our suggestion that a theophanic experience occurred in the sanctuary. In similar fashion to Job, the sage articulates the theological concept that meaningful existence may come only to the righteous who find true meaning in

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[1] עמל. This also is paralleled in Koheleth (cf. 2:20, 4: 4, 6, 8; 6:7, etc.).

[2] מקדשי אל may be seen as a plural of majesty (cf. Jer. 51:51, Ezek. 21:7, Ps. 68:36). See Ernst Würthwein, "Erwägungen zu Psalm 73," Festschrift Alfred Bertholet (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1950), p. 547; and A. A. Anderson, The Book of Psalms, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, p. 533). Birkeland has made an unsuccessful attempt to see in the "sanctuaries of El" a reference to illegitimate sanctuaries which were destroyed, thus placing the psalm within the struggle between the righteous Israelites and the wicked Canaanites or apostate Israelites, and adds that זונה in v. 27 supports the idea of pagan fertility rites and idolatry ("The Chief Problem of Ps. 73:17f.," ZAW, LV [1967], 99-103). Such is suggestive, but totally unprovable, since the description of the wicked involves their blasphemous mockery of God, not apostasy.

[3] Würthwein suggests a prophetic oracle has been received by the psalmist in the cult (op. cit., p. 548).

[4] Anderson, op. cit., p. 534. This may be the idea suggested by the term כבוד in v. 24, since כבוד is often used for the theophany of God.

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the "nearness of God."[1] In other words, theological existence is the keystone of the righteous and meaningful life, for the one who has this intimacy of the relationship with God finds his security in him, which, in times of distress, provides him with deliverance, whereas the wicked, not sharing this relationship, are destroyed in times of catastrophe.

The conclusion reaffirms the theology of the maxim, though the sage adds a reflective note by defining the "good" of the maxim in terms of the "nearness to God." Thus this sage discovers, at least for his own theological understanding, that an intellectual understanding of evil is impossible, and that it is only in the cultic experience of God that one is able to transcend the intellectual incongruities between wisdom teaching concerning retribution and one's own sapiential experience.

Psalm 112: "Concerning the Righteous and the Wicked"

Introduction. An examination of Psalm 112 reveals a rather striking similarity with respect to content, form and structure to Psalm 1,[2] and, like the first psalm, should be classified as a wisdom psalm.[3] Sapiential forms present in this psalm include

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[1] P. A. Munch, "Das Problem des Reichtums in den Ps. 37, 49, 73.," p. 40.

[2] Both psalms have in common the following: the introductory 'ashrê saying, a structure built around an antithetical proverb, the form of the didactic poem, and the contrasting of the righteous and wicked.

[3] Most scholars of the psalms have classified this psalm as wisdom literature (e.g., see Kraus, Psalmen, p. 771).

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the *'ashrê* saying in v. 1, the two part proverb in 6b and 10c, and the form of the entire psalm which is clothed in the apparel of an acrostic, didactic poem.[1] Themes common to wisdom literature which are found in our psalm include the description of the behavior of the righteous as contrasted to that of the wicked, the principle of just retribution, the stress upon the "fear of God," and the piety of the wise man who "delights in the commandments." Sapiential language includes the terms יראת יהוה (v. 1), מצות (v. 1), ישרים (vv. 2, 4), צדק (vv. 3, 4, 6, 9), משפט (v. 5), אביון (v. 9), and רשע (v. 10). Finally the application of the method of New Stylistics discloses an artistically structured wisdom psalm.

Translation and Structural Analysis.

Superscription

Praise the Lord

Introduction: An *'Ashrê* Saying

Happy is the man who fears the Lord,
Who delights exceedingly in his commandments.

Strophe I: Concerning the Blessings of the Righteous Man

His offspring shall be a mighty man in the land.
The generation of the upright will be blessed.
Wealth and riches are in his house.

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[1] Such a didactic poem describing the righteous is found in other wisdom texts as well: Psalm 1, Prov. 31:10-31 ("The Ideal Housewife"), and Sir. 14:20-27 and 39:1-11. For a brief discussion of the didactic poem, see von Rad (*Wisdom in Israel*, pp. 38f.) who laments the absence of detailed studies of this genre.

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Refrain (Proverb a)

And his righteousness endures forever.

Strophe II: Concerning the Behavior of the Righteous Man

The sun rises for the righteous man even in darkness,
Gracious and merciful is the righteous man.
It goes well for the one who shows favor and lends.
He conducts his affairs with justice,
For he shall not be moved forever.

Refrain (Proverb a)

The righteous man shall have an eternal remembrance.

Strophe III: Concerning the Faith of the Righteous Man

He shall not fear an evil report.
His heart is secure, trusting in the Lord.
His heart is steady, he shall not be afraid.
Even when he sees his adversaries.
He gives freely to the needy.

Refrain (Proverb a)

His righteousness endures forever.

Strophe IV: "Concerning the Wicked"

His horn[1] shall be exalted in honor.
The wicked man sees it and is angry.
He gnashes his teeth and grows fearful.

Antithesis to the Refrain (Proverb b)

The desire of the wicked will perish.

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[1] "Horn" is a metaphor for an increase in dignity and strength (cf. I Sam. 2:1, 10; Pss. 75:11, 89:18, 25).

Even with the rather stringent limitations imposed by the acrostic device,[1] our poet has been able to construct an artistic poem around an antithetical proverb which he has divided into its two hemistichs, and has placed them at the conclusion of each of the four major strophes. The proverb[2] is as follows:

לזכר עולם יהיה צדיק
a The righteous man shall have an eternal remembrance
וצדקתו עמדת לעד
(And his righteousness endures forever)
צדקתו עמדת לעד
(His righteousness endures forever)
(ו) תאות רשעים תאבד
b (But) the desire of the wicked will perish

Thus, once more we find a wisdom psalm structured around a simple, sapiential saying which, in addition, provides the theme for the artistically developed poem. Furthermore, the single unit lines of the strophes number respectively 3, 5, 5, 3, thus making the arrangement of the strophes in terms of structure a chiasm. Repetitions include the key words צדק (vv. 3, 4, 6, 9) ישרים (vv. 2, 4), רשע (twice in v. 10), לעד ועולם (vv. 3, 6, 9), ירא (vv. 1, 7, 8), ראה (vv. 8, 10), and עמד (vv. 3, 10). The psalmist also has a penchant for the number two: 2 strophes of 3 lines and 2 strophes of 5 lines, the terms for the righteous (צדיק, ישר) and the wicked (צרים, רשעים), and words occurring in pairs: הון and

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[1] The acrostic arrangement is frequently found in wisdom literature: Pss. 34, 37; Sir. 51:13-30, and "The Babylonian Theodicy."

[2] Cf. Prov. 10:7, 24, 11:23.

עשר, v. 3; רחון and חנון, v. 4; מלוה and הונן, v. 5; בטח and נכון v. 7; יירא and סמוך, v. 8; נתן and פזר, v. 9; כעס and יראה, v. 10; and נמס and יהרק, v. 10.

Exegesis. Psalm 112 is an artistically constructed didactic poem contrasting the behavior and lot of the righteous with those of the wicked. The righteous man's behavior is characterized by fear of God, delighting in the commandments, generosity to those in need, just dealings, and lack of fear, whereas, in contrast, the wicked man is consumed by his jealousy and anger aroused by the just behavior and good fortune of the righteous man. While the righteous man receives his due rewards for his sagacious behavior (prosperity, family, honor, and above all, a measure of immortality in his being remembered for his righteousness), the wicked man's desires in life come to naught, for he is consumed by his own jealous rage. Such demonstrates that our sagacious author regards himself to be a devotee of the sapiential dogma of retribution, and thus places himself in the company of the pious wise.

Psalm 19B: "In Praise of Torah and A Prayer for Deliverance from Sin"

Introduction. Psalm 19B combines elements of praise of Torah with those of an individual lament and is, therefore, comparable to Psalm 119. We have concluded that this psalm most probably rests within the category of wisdom psalms on the basis of the following.[1] Sapiential forms include the comparative sayings in v. 11, and the rhetorical question embedded in v. 13.[2] Themes prominent in wisdom literature that are expressed in the psalm include the dogma of retribution (v. 12), the exaltation of torah and its identification with wisdom (vv. 8-10),[3] and the emphasis upon prayer, in this case a prayer for deliverance from sin. Wisdom vocabulary includes: חכם (v. 8), פתי (v. 8), ישר (v. 9), לב (v. 9), מאיר (v. 9),[4] יראת יהוה (v. 10), צדק (v. 10), and זד (v. 14). Finally, structural analysis further supports a wisdom classification.

Translation and Structural Analysis.

Strophe I In Praise of Torah

The law (תורה) of the Lord is perfect,
 refreshing the soul.
The testimony (עדות) of the Lord is sure,
 making the simple wise.
The precepts (פקוד) of the Lord are upright,
 making the heart rejoice.
The commandment (מצוה) of the Lord is pure,
 enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the Lord (יראה) is clean,
 enduring forever.

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[1] Cf. Dahood, Psalms, I, p. 121.

[2] Gunkel points to the rhetorical question in "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom," (Tablet II, ll. 36-38) as a parallel (Die Psalmen, p. 79).

[3] Kraus comments: "Vorstellungen der חכמה -Theologie verbunden sich auch in Ps. 1 und 119 mit dem nachexilischen תורה-Verständnis, aus der Weisung Gottes störmt Leben und Weisheit. Die Thora ist Anweisung zum Leben " (Psalmen, p. 159).

[4] See Prov. 29:13; Ecc. 8:1.

The ordinances(משפטי) of the Lord are true,
    and altogether righteous.

Comparative Sayings

(The Ordinances of the Lord)[1] are more desirable than gold,
    and more than much fine gold.
They are sweeter than honey,
    even the fine honey of the honey-combs.

Strophe II A Prayer for Deliverance from Sins

Also, your servant is warned by them,
    in the observing of them is great reward.
Who can discern hidden sins?
    Make me innocent of secret faults.
Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins,
    let them not rule over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
    and I shall be innocent of great transgression.
May the words of my mouth,
    and the meditation of my heart,
    be acceptable unto you,
    O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.[2]

The structure of the psalm involves two strophes which are divided by an intervening couplet consisting of two comparison sayings which metaphorically describe the law as "sweeter than honey" and "more desirable than gold," a description elaborated upon in the two major strophes. The first emits an exultant praise of the superb qualities and beneficent merits of Torah, and the second is a description of the law as a tutor which instructs one in the awareness of sins, and, upon the basis of that important knowledge, allows the informed devotee to ask for divine forgiveness.

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[1] The words in parentheses are not found in the text, but are understood from the lines which have preceeded. Similar proverbs are found in Prov. 3:14-15, 16:16; Sir. 40:25-27.

[2] Verse 15 is a "dedicatory formula." Gunkel believes this was also presented at the times of sacrifice: "Und wie der Opfernde, wenn das Opfer angerichtet ist, die Weiheformel spricht, in der er seine Gabe der Gottheit darbietet, so legt er jetzt sein Gedicht vor Gott nieder." (Die Psalmen, p. 79). However, we feel such dedicatory formulae were typical in the scribal circles, for scribes dedicated their artistic creations to the gods and goddesses of wisdom and order (e.g. see the dedicatory formula at the end of Kramer's Schooldays: A Sumerian Composition Relating to the Education of the Scribe," ll. 74f.).

Strophe I is uniformly structured, consisting of 6 stichs (12 hemistichs), each of which has the following sentence structure: the subject consisting of a different synonym for law which is placed in construct with Yahweh, a predicate adjective which immediately follows, and a participial noun placed in construct with an absolute noun which serves as the direct object. In demonstrating an artist's flair for vocabulary and a penchant for the number 6, the author has constructed a six line strophe possessing 6 synonyms for law, 6 predicate adjectives descriptive of torah, and 6 different verbs.

The second strophe likewise consists of 6 lines (12 hemistichs) of varying sentence structure, interlinked by the following *mots crochets*: רב (vv. 12, 14), נקה (vv. 13, 14), and עבד (vv. 12, 14). The second strophe is yoked to the comparative sayings by the two-fold repetition of the word רב (v. 11). An inclusion for the entire psalm is the word תם (vv. 8, 14).

Exegesis. Strophe I, which presents us with a laudatory praise of torah, is quite comparable to Ps. 119 and to the description of wisdom in Wis. 7:22f. Once more we find a wisdom psalm which identifies wisdom and torah in comparable fashion to Sirach. The second strophe is also comparable to Ps. 119 in that it consists of a penitential prayer[1] in which the sage, tutored by torah, is able to recognize his sins and to turn to God for divine forgiveness.[2] Yahweh serves not only as the one who forgives sin, but in addition is the one to whom a prayer for guidance in the avoidance of sin is made, and thus is connected with the same function of torah. But most important for our concerns is the evidence contained in this psalm that the wise not only participated in prayer, primarily in terms of the lament-thanksgiving cycle, but apparently wrote their own, giving us another primary source for the cultic piety of the Israelite wise.[3]

Psalm 127: "Concerning Vain Toil and the Blessing of Sons"

Introduction. Psalm 127 appears as though it had been a leaf taken from a collection of Proverbs, for it contains two "strophes" of proverbial materials: two conditional proverbs (v. 1), an admonition (v. 4), a synonymous proverb (v. 3), a comparative proverb (v. 4), and an *'ashrē* saying (v. 5). The two sapiential themes respectively are "labor done in vain" and "the blessing of sons." Because of the dominance of the proverb form, we have chosen to classify the psalm among the proverb psalms, though it should be stressed that in contradistinction to the other proverb psalms we have examined, there is no central proverb around which the strophes of the psalm have been structured.[1]

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[1] Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 153, and Gunkel, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

[2] The sins which apparently most concern our sage are those done inadvertently or in ignorance (שגיאות), presumptuous sins (זד, v. 14), and rebellion (פשע, v. 14).

[3] This prayer is quite similar to Sirach's "Prayer for Self-Control" (22:27-23:4).

Translation and Structural Analysis.

Superscription

A Song of Ascents. By Solomon.

Strophe I: "Concerning Vain Toil"

A If the Lord does not build the house,
Its builders labor in vain.
B If the Lord does not guard a city,
Its watchman has watched in vain.
C It is vain for you to rise early in the morning,
Following a night of rest,
In order to eat the bread of wearisome toil,
For such a one gives to his beloved[2] nothing.[3]

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[1] Most scholars have regarded the psalm as a wisdom psalm (Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 553f.; Kraus, Psalmen, p. 858), though Lipiński ("Macarismes et psaumes de congratulation," p. 351) regards the psalm as a song of congratulations sung at the birth of a son.

[2] ידידו, the masculine form of the adjective, may be explained as an example of the usage of masculine forms instead of the appropriate feminine forms, a grammatical phenomenon quite common in Hebrew. In fact such occurs with regard to ידיד in Jer. 11:15.

[3] MT reads שנא (an Aramaism for שנה, "Sleep"). If followed, the point would be a rejection of the practice of overwork which leads one to give only "sleep" to his beloved, and not sexual intimacy. However, we have emended the reading to שוא, due to the facts that the two words are most similar in spelling and that שוא is the key word of the strophe and initiates unit C, thus providing a nice inclusion for the unit.

Strophe II: "The Blessings of Sons"

D Behold, sons are the heritage given by the Lord,
    A laborer's wage is the fruit of the womb.
E Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
    So are the sons of one's youth.
F Happy is the man who has filled his quiver full of them.
    Such ones are not ashamed when they speak with
    their enemies in the gate.

The first strophe contains two conditional proverbs (A and B, "If...then...") which are intimately yoked together in terms of form, content (the vanity of labor not supported by the Lord), and terminology ("If the Lord does not...then...is vain").[1] Unit C is an admonition linked to the conditional proverb in content, and by the recurrence of the key word שוא, found twice in C and twice in AB.

The second strophe contains a synonymous proverb (D), a comparative proverb (E), and an 'ashrê saying (F). The repetitions include בנים (vv. 3, 4), and גבר וגבור (vv. 4, 5). The theme of the strophe is the blessing one finds in the birth of sons.

Exegesis. At first glance, the two strophes appear disparate, unrelated units as pertains to content, structure, and language. However, it may well be that they have been linked together by a wise man who used the second strophe to elaborate upon part C. Thus overwork leads to exhaustion along with little time and energy for the marriage bed, with the obvious consequence of failing to produce male offspring who are not only a source of familial pride and loyalty, but support as well in the father's toils.

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[1] E.g., cf. Koh. 10:10, 11.

Be that as it may, the two themes of vain toil without the support of Yahweh[1] and the blessing of male offspring[2] are common wisdom themes, and thus further support the classification of the psalm as wisdom literature.

C. 'Ashrê Psalms

A second sub-category of wisdom psalms is the *'Ashrê* Psalm in which a "happy" saying provides the basis for the content and structure of the developed psalm. There are two such wisdom psalms in the psalter: 32 and 119.

Psalm 32: "Concerning the Forgiveness of Sins"

Introduction. Psalm 32 also belongs to the genre of wisdom psalms, since it is a psalm whose content and structure are developed around the two introductory "happy" sayings in vv. 1 and 2 which deal with the forgiveness of sins. The psalmist seeks to demonstrate the means by which such a state of "happiness" is obtained, and the answer is the lament-thanksgiving cycle.[3] The classification of the psalm as a wisdom psalm may be determined upon the basis of our previously discussed and applied methodology of genre identification and analysis. Sapiential forms found in this psalm include an instruction (vv. 8-10) and the two 'ashrê sayings (vv. 1-2). The individual thanksgiving that is found in vv. 3-7 certainly is not a genre limited to the literary creativity of the wise, but such a genre certainly belonged to the literary repertoire of the sages as we have seen. Furthermore it will be our argument that vv. 3-7 are presented as a model thanksgiving psalm, the rubrics of which should be mastered by the young scribal novitiates, and its theology affirmed and put into the cultic devotion of the pious sages. Sagacious language includes: עצה (v. 8), שכל (v. 8), ירה (v. 8), רשע (v. 10), ישר (v. 11), and צדיק (v. 11). Sapiential motifs include the typical dichotomy drawn between the wicked (רשע) and the righteous צדיק, חסיד, ישר, just retribution dispensed by the divine judge (v. 10), the interpretation of suffering as caused by sin, and the affirmation of the theology of the lament-thanksgiving cycle.[1] Finally, we shall demonstrate that the structure and content of the psalm is supportive of a sapiential classification.

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[1] Cf. Prov. 21:31; James 4:13f., and especially Koheleth.

[2] Cf. Ani, III, 2-3, and the Joban Narrative.

[3] Because the psalm includes the major components of an individual psalm of thanksgiving, a number of scholars have typed the psalm accordingly (e.g., Kraus, *Psalmen*, p. 254; and Ridderbos, *Die Psalmen*, p. 231).

Translation and Structural Analysis.

Introduction: The Two 'Ashrê Sayings

a (1) Happy is he
(2) whose transgression is forgiven,
(3) whose sin is covered.
b (1) Happy is the man
(2) whose sin is not reckoned to him by the Lord,
(3) and who has no deceit in his spirit.

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[1] Cf. our discussions of Job and Sirach in Chapter IV.

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Strophe I: The Model Thanksgiving Psalm

A	When I was silent, my body wasted away
Narrative	In a state of moaning throughout the day.
	Both day and night
	Your hand was heavy against me.
	My body's life-giving juices[1] were dried up
	As though by the summer's heat.
B	I confessed my sin unto you,
Confession	I did not conceal my iniquity.
and	I said, "I shall confess my transgressions to the
Forgiveness	Lord."
	And you bore the iniquity of my sin.
C	Therefore, let every pious person make entreaty
Admonition	unto you,
to the	At the time of distress.[2]
Assembly	During the rushing of many waters,
	They will not reach him.
	You are a hiding place to me;
	You keep me from destruction;
	Deliverance encompasses me.[3]

Strophe II: The Instruction Concerning Sin

C^1	I shall instruct and teach you in the way that you
Introduction	should go.
	I shall give counsel[4] concerning my iniquity.[5]

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[1] לשדי, literally "to Shaddai," should probably be read as לשד, "bodily juices" (Num. 11:8).

[2] מצא רק in the MT, "the discovery of only" is without grammatical and logical sense, and, thus, should probably be regarded as מצר ("distress") or מצא רע ("the discovery of evil").

[3] The MT contains a dittography, תצ(רני) רני, which should be excised.

[4] Reading אעצה for איעצא.

[5] We are omitting the ךָ in עליך, and are reading עֲוֹנִי for עֵינִי.

B^1 Admonition
Do not be like a horse or mule
Which does not pay heed to bridle and bit.
For when it is approached for curbing,
It will not come near to you.[1]

A^1 Gnomic Conclusion
Many are the pains of the wicked,
But steadfast love envelops the one who trusts in the Lord.

Conclusion: The Thanksgiving

a^1 Delight in the Lord, and exult, O righteous ones,
b^1 And utter a joyous shout all you who are upright.

As is the case with most of the wisdom psalms, Psalm 32 finds the basis for its structural and thematic development in a simple wisdom form, in this case in the two initial 'ashrê sayings. The major mots crochets which recur throughout the poem are the synonyms for sin: פשע ("transgression"), חטאה ("sin"), and עון ("iniquity"). These are found in the "happy" sayings and are repeated in the two major strophes (vv. 5, 8, 11). In fact, the sagacious psalmist has a preference for the number three, a point that provides us with some incisive insight into the literary structure of the entire psalm: the three synonyms for the "righteous" (ישר, חסיד, צדיק), the three references to the confession of sin (v. 5 אודה, לֹא כסיתי, אודיעך), the three expressions for instruction (v. 8 שכל, ירה , עצה), and the three imperatives issued to the audience to rejoice with him (שמחה, גיל , רנן).[1] In addition, each of the two introductory sayings consists of three hemistichs which are paralleled by the three units of the model thanksgiving in vv. 3-7 (A, B, C), and the three constitutive units of the instruction in vv. 8-10 (C^1, B^1, A^1). The two introductory sayings (a, b) are paralleled by the two major strophes which develop the content of the sayings, as well as a^1 and b^1 of the thanksgiving conclusion. In terms of external parallelism, the two introductory sayings which bespeak the state of happiness experienced by the one who has received forgiveness of sins are paralleled also by the conclusion of the thanksgiving which tells those righteous who are assured of "forgiveness of sins" to "rejoice," "exult," and "shout for joy." Finally in terms of external parallelism, the two major strophes are chiastically structured in terms of content: $A=A^1$, $B=B^1$, and $C=C^1$.

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[1] We have followed the cogent translation of Castellino who seeks to solve the major problems of this quite difficult verse ("Psalm XXXII 9," VT, II [1952], 37-42). He suggests that עדיו should be regarded as an example of the textual critical error of transposition of letters, in this case the yôdh and the ḥôlem, and therefore reads עדוי, from עדה, "to approach" (Job 28:8).

Exegesis. This wisdom psalm seeks to affirm to the pious wise the proper response to suffering, which is understood as punishment or chastisement for sin, in order that the suffering and the sin which precipitated it might be removed, and subsequently the forgiven sinner may experience the state of well-being, happiness, and the love of the deity which should result. This response is the same one that had been supported by the traditional wise opponents of Job as they counseled him to relent from his blasphemy and to make the proper response: the cultic response of the lament-thanksgiving cycle.

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[1] Ridderbos, Die Psalmen, p. 234.

Therefore, the state of happiness and the entrance into the sphere of well-being which envelop the forgiven sinner is ably introduced in the two initial _'ashrê_ sayings. Then follow the two major strophes of the psalm. Strophe I, we believe, should be considered as a didactic model for instructing sages in the formulation of the typical thanksgiving psalm, and contains the major characteristics of such a genre: the narrative in which the speaker tells of his past suffering, the confession and acknowledgement of sin followed by the exultant declaration of forgiveness and salvation by the deity, and the didactic admonition to the congregation to do likewise, for the psalmist points to his own experience as validating the fact that God is a haven and redeemer to those in distress. Verse 5 is the key verse in the second strophe for, by referring back to ab, it affirms that one's sins are concealed (כסוי) by the sinner's refusal to conceal them from God (לא כסיתי), and that one's sins are borne (נשוי) by allowing them to be borne away by the deity (נשאת עון).[1]

The second strophe consists of a typical instruction of three parts. The first is the introduction in which the sage

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[1] נשא חטאה is a frequent expression for forgiveness of sins.

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announces his intent to instruct his students concerning his own iniquity. The second part is the admonition in the form of a prohibition in which a metaphorical comparison is drawn between the wicked, stubborn fool who refuses to swallow his pride and make the proper cultic response and the disobedient, rebellious horse or mule which lacks self-control and rejects the "guidance" of bridle and bit. The comparison is made by the sage in order to convince young students to adhere to his counsel, and more specifically, to emphasize the acceptance of the validity of the cultic response to sin and suffering. The final segment of the instruction is the typical conclusion which consists of an antithetical proverb pertaining to retribution--only the wicked suffer greatly, presumably because of their sins, but the ones who trust in the deity enjoy the special gift of his steadfast love. Therefore those who participate in the proper cultic response to sin and suffering receive forgiveness and enter once more into the state of happiness, well-being, and the steadfast love of God.[1]

Finally, a thanksgiving conclusion ends our psalm in which the צדיקים, those who have been forgiven of their sins, are told to express their happiness and joy in praise to the righteous deity.

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[1] Such parallels our arguments regarding Prov. 16:6 as concerns the proper way that sins are "forgiven." Cf. Chapter IV.

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Psalm 119: "The Study of Torah and A Sapiential Lament"

Introduction. With the identification of wisdom and Torah in the circles of the scribes of Torah in the Post-Exile, it is not surprising to find psalms which exude this spirit of sagacious piety.[1] The most extensive and well-structured among such psalms is the massive 119th Psalm. The classification of this psalm as a wisdom psalm, and more specifically, as an *'ashrê* psalm, is supported by the occurrences of wisdom forms (*'ashrê* sayings, vv. 1-2; the catechetical question and answer, v. 9; and two better sayings, vv. 72, 127); wisdom themes (the identification of wisdom and torah,[2] the study and love of torah in late wisdom piety,[3] the fear of God, praying for wisdom, the efficaciousness of the prayer of a righteous, wise man, God as creator and overseer of world order, God as the source, giver, and instructor of true wisdom, retribution, the dichotomy drawn between the righteous and the wicked, and suffering as chastisement), and sapiential vocabulary[4] (teach/learn, vv. 7, 12,

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[1] Most scholars have argued for including the psalm among the wisdom psalms (Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 806; and Alfons Deissler, *Psalm 119 (118) und seine Theologie*, MthSt, XI [München: Karl Zink Verlag, 1955], 269f.). Also see A. Robert, "Le Psaume CXIX et les sapientiaux," *RB*, XLVIII (1939), pp. 5-20.

[2] See Sirach. Yet it is apparent from the anthological nature of the psalm the "law" is not simply the Pentateuch, but includes the prophetic and sapiential traditions as well (Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 806f.).

[3] See H.-J. Kraus, "Freude an Gottes Gesetz," *EvTh*, X (1951), 337-51.

[4] Deissler, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-73.

26, 67, etc.; צדק, vv. 7, 40, 62, 75, etc.; ישר, vv. 7, 128, 137; חכם, v. 98; זקנים ("ancestral wise,"), v. 100; בין, vv. 27, 34, 73, etc.; עצה v. 24; ירא, vv. 3, 8, 63, 74, etc.; שיח, vv. 15, 23, 27, etc.; חשב, v. 59; ידע, vv. 79, 125, 152; שכל, v. 99; פתי v. 130, and the different synonymns for the wicked (רשעים, צרים, רדפים, זדים, מרעים, vv. 53, 61, 95, etc.).

Translation and Structural Analysis.

א Strophe I

The 'Ashrê Sayings

Happy are those whose way is blameless,
Those who walk in the Torah (תורה) of the Lord.
Happy are those who keep his testimonies (עדות),
Who seek him with all their heart,
Who commit no evil,
But rather walk in his ways.
You have commanded that your precepts (פקוד) be closely kept.
O that my ways may be sure
By keeping your statutes (חק).
I shall not be ashamed,
For I have observed all your commandments (מצוה).
I will praise you with an upright heart,
When I learn your righteous ordinances
I will keep your statutes (חק),
Do not completely abandon me.

ב Strophe II

How can a youth make his path pure?
By keeping your word (דבר).
With all my heart I have sought you,
Do not allow me to stray from your commandments (מצוה).
I have stored your word (אמרה) in my heart
In order that I might not sin against you.
Blessed are you, O Lord,
You have taught me your statutes (חק).
With my lips I recount
All the ordinances (משפט) of your mouth.

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I exult in the way of your testimonies (עדות),
As I would exult over all prosperity.
I will meditate on your precepts (פקוד),
And I will observe your paths.
In your statutes (חק) I will take delight,
And I will not forget your word (דבר).

ג Strophe III

Act for your servant, that I may live,
And that I may keep your word (דבר).
Open my eyes that I may observe
Miracles from your law (תורה).
I am a sojourner in the land,
Do not hide your commandments (מצוה) from me.
My soul is consumed with longing
For your ordinances (משפט) at all times.
You rebuke the accursed proud,
Those who stray from your commandments (מצוה).
Take from me scorn and contempt,
For I have kept your testimonies (עדות).
Though princes have taken their seats to plot against me,
Your servant will meditate on your statutes (חק).
Your testimonies (עדות) are my delight,
As well as my counsellors.

ד Strophe IV

My life cleaves to the dust,
Give me life according to your word (דבר).
I have recounted my ways, and you did answer me,
Teach me your statutes (חק).
The way of your testimonies (פקוד) make me understand,
So that I may meditate on all your wonders.
My soul melts for grief,
Raise me up according to your word (דבר).
Make me turn away from the path of falsehood,
And show mercy according to your law (תורה).
I have chosen the way of truth,
I have set forth your ordinances (משפט).
I cleave to your testimony (עדות), O Lord,
Do not make me ashamed.
I shall run the course of your commandments (מצוה),
Because you have enlarged my understanding.

ה Strophe V

Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes (חק),
    And I shall keep it to the end.
Give me understanding so that I may keep your law (תורה),
    And I shall keep it with all my heart.
Direct me in the path of your commandments (מצוה),
    Because I take delight in it.
Incline my heart toward your testimonies (עדות),
    And not toward profit.
Make my eyes to turn from beholding vanity,
    Make me live according to your word (דבר).[1]
Establish your word (אמרה) for your servant,
    Which is for fear of you.
Turn away my reproach which I dread,
    Because your ordinances (משפט) are good.
Behold, I long for your precepts (פקוד),
    Give me life in your righteousness.

ו Strophe VI

Let your steadfast love come to me, O Lord,
    Your salvation according to your word (אמרה).
So that I may answer those who reproach me,
    For I have trusted in your word (דבר).
Do not take completely from my mouth the word of truth,
    For I have waited for your ordinances (משפט).
Let me keep your law (תורה) continually,
    Forever and ever.
Let me walk in a broad expanse,
    For I have sought your precepts (פקוד).
Let me speak of your testimonies (עדות) before kings,
    And let me not be ashamed.
Let me delight in your commandments (מצוה),
    Which I love.
And I will lift up my hands to your commandments (מצוה)
which I love,
    And I shall meditate on your statutes (חק).

ז Strophe VII

Recall thy word (דבר) concerning your servant,
    By which you have made me hope.
I have been comforted by this in my affliction,
    Because your word (אמרה) gives me life.

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[1] Read דבר with two Heb Mss instead of דרך.

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The proud have mocked me exceedingly,
    Yet I have not turned from your law (תורה).
I have remembered your statutes (משפט) from of old,
    O Lord, and I am comforted.
Indignation grips me because of the wicked,
    Those who abandon your law (תורה).
Your statutes (חק) have been my songs,
    In the house of my sojourning.
I remember your name at night, O Lord,
    And I have kept your law (תורה).
This has been mine,
    Because I keep your precepts (פקוד).

ח Strophe VIII

I said, "The Lord is my portion,"
    In order to keep your words (דבר).
I entreat your face with all my heart,
    Have mercy upon me according to your word (אמרה).
I have considered my ways,
    And I have turned my feet toward your testimonies (עדות).
I make haste, and I do not tarry,
    To keep your commandments (מצוה).
Though the cords of the wicked have surrounded me,
    Yet I have not forgotten your law (תורה).
During the middle of the night I arise to praise you,
    For your righteous ordinances (משפט).
I am a companion to all who fear you,
    To those who keep your precepts (פקוד).
Your steadfast love, O Lord, has filled the earth,
    Teach me your statutes (חק).

ט Strophe IX

You have acted beneficently with your servant,
    O Lord according to your word (דבר).
Before I was afflicted[1] I went astray,
    But now I keep your word (אמרה).
You are good, and you do good,
    Teach me your statutes (חק).
The proud have smeared me with falsehood,
    Yet I continue to keep your precepts (פקוד) with all
    my heart.

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[1] Read the niphal of ענה, "afflicted," with the LXX instead of MT ענה, "answer."

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Their heart is gross like fat,
    I rejoice in your law (תורה).
It is good for me that I was afflicted,
    In order that I might learn your statutes (חק).
The law (תורה) of your mouth is better to me,
    Than thousands of pieces of gold and silver.

י Strophe X

Your hands made me and fashioned me,
    Enlighten me so that I may learn your commandments (מצוה).
Those who fear you will see me and rejoice,
    Because I hope in your word (דבר).
I know, O Lord, that your ordinances (משפט) are just,
    And in faithfulness you have afflicted me.
Let your steadfast love be my comfort,
    According to your word (אמרה) to your servant.
Allow your mercies to come to me so that I may live,
    Because your law (תורה) is my joy.
Let the proud be ashamed because they have subverted me with falsehood.
    I will meditate on your precepts (פקוד).
Let those return to me who fear you,
    So that they may know your testimonies (עדות).
Let my heart be blameless by your statutes (חק),
    So that I may not be ashamed.

כ Strophe XI

My soul wastes away for your salvation,
    I await your word (דבר).
My eyes have grown dim for your word (אמרה),
    I say, "When will you comfort me"?
For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke.
    I have not forgotten your statutes (חק).
How long will your servant suffer?
    When will you mete justice out to my persecutors?
The proud have dug pitfalls for me,
    Those who are not in accordance with your law (תורה).
All your commandments (מצוה) are faithful,
    They persecute me falsely, "Help me"!
They have almost consumed me on earth,
    But I have not abandoned your precepts (פקוד).
According to your steadfast love give me life,
    And let me keep the testimony (עדות) of your mouth.

ל Strophe XII

Forever, O Lord,
Your word (דבר) is established in the heavens.
Generation by generation is your faithfulness,
You have established the earth to endure.
According to your ordinances (משפט) they stand unto this day,
For all your servants.
If your law (תורה) had not been my joy,
Then I would have perished in my affliction.
I shall never forget your precepts (פקוד),
Because you have given me life by them.
I am yours, save me,
Because I seek your precepts (פקוד).
The evil ones lie in the way to destroy me,
But I consider your testimonies (עדות).
I have seen an end of every perfect thing,
But your commandments (מצוה) are limitless.

מ Strophe XIII

O how I love your law (תורה),
It is my meditation all the day.
By your commandments (מצוה) you have made me wiser than all my enemies,
For they are mine forever,
I have been wiser than all my teachers,
Because your testimonies (עדות) are my meditation.
I have been more intelligent than the ancestors,
Because your precepts (פקוד) I have kept.
I have withdrawn my feet from every path,
In order that I might keep your word (דבר).
I have not turned aside from your ordinances (משפט),
Because you have instructed me.
How your word (אמרה) is smooth to my palate,
More than honey to my mouth.
I have been enlightened by your precepts (פקוד),
Therefore I have despised every deceitful path.

נ Strophe XIV

Your word (דבר) is a lamp unto my feet,
And a light for my path.
I have sworn, and I have established my oath,
To keep your righteous ordinances (משפט).
I have been afflicted severely,
O Lord revive me according to your word (דבר).

The offerings of my mouth, accept O Lord,
     And teach me your ordinances (משפט).
My life is in my hands always,
     And I have not forgotten your law (תורה).
The wicked have devised a snare for me,
     But I have not wandered from your precepts (פקוד).
My heritage forever is your testimony (עדות),
     Because they are the exultation of my heart.
I have inclined my heart to practice your statutes (חק),
     Forever without end.

ס Strophe XV

I despise half-hearted men,
     But I love your law (תורה).
You are my hiding place and my shield,
     I hope in your word (דבר).
Depart from me practitioners of evil,
     That I may keep the commandments (מצוה) of my God.
Support me according to your word (אמרה), and I shall live,
     And do not let me be put to shame in my hope.
Hold me up that I may be safe,
     And I will behold your statutes (חק) continually.
You abandon those who stray from your statutes (חק),
     Because their deceit is falsehood.
You have considered as dross all the wicked of the earth,
     Therefore I have loved your testimonies (עדות).
My body trembles because I fear you,
     And I am afraid of your ordinances (משפט).

ע Strophe XVI

I have acted justly (משפט) and righteously,
     Do not leave me to my oppressors.
Act as a surety for your servant to his benefit,
     Let not the proud oppress me.
My eyes grow dim for your salvation,
     And for your righteous word (אמרה).
Deal with your servant according to your steadfast love,
     And teach me your statutes (חק).
I am your servant, give me understanding,
     So that I may know your testimonies (עדות).
It is time for the Lord to act,
     They have broken your law (תורה).
Therefore, I love your commandments (מצוה)
     Better than gold and fine gold.

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Therefore, I esteem as right all your precepts (פקוד),[1]
    Every path of falsehood I have hated.

פ Strophe XVII

Your testimonies (עדות) are wondrous,
    Therefore my soul has kept them.
The doorway of your word (דבר) emits light,
    Making wise the simple.
I pant with my mouth open,
    Because I desire your commandments (מצוה).
Turn to me and be gracious unto me,
    According to the ordinance (משפט) to those who live by
    your name.
Establish my steps by means of your word (אמרה),
    And do not allow every evil to rule over me.
Redeem me from human oppression,
    So that I may keep your statutes (פקוד).
Make your face to shine upon your servant,
    And teach me your statutes (חק).
Channels of water have streamed down from my eyes,
    Because they have not kept your torah (תורה).

צ Strophe XVIII

You are righteous O Lord,
    And your ordinances (משפט) are upright.
You have commanded righteously your testimonies (עדות),
    And exceedingly faithfully.
My zeal has consumed me,
    Because my adversaries have forgotten your words (דבר).
Your word (אמרה) is well tested,
    And your servant loves it.
I am small and despised,
    Yet your precepts (פקוד) I have not forgotten.
Your just righteousness endures forever,
    And your faithful law (תורה).
Adversity and anguish have found me,
    But your commandments (מצוה) are my joy.
Your testimonies (עדות) are righteous forever,
    Make me understand so that I may live.

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[1] Read פקודיך for MT פקודי כל.

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ק Strophe XIX

I called with all my heart,
    Answer me, O Lord! I will keep your statutes (חק).
I cry unto you, save me,
    So that I may keep your testimonies (עדות).
I rise up before the break of day, and I cry out,
    For I await thy word (דבר).
My eyes arise as the watches of the night,
    To meditate on your word (אמרה).
Hear my voice according to your steadfast love,
    O Lord revive me according to your ordinances (משפט).[1]
Evil persecutors draw near,
    They are far from your law (תורה).
You are near, O Lord,
    And all your commandments (מצוה) are true.
I long have known from your testimonies (עדות)
    That you have established them forever.

ר Strophe XX

Look upon my affliction and rescue me,
    Because I have not forgotten your law (תורה).
Plead my case and redeem me,
    Give me life according to your word (אמרה).
Save me far from the wicked,
    For they have not sought out your statutes (חק).
Your mercies are many, O Lord,
    Give me life according to your ordinances (משפט).
Many are my persecutors and my adversaries,
    I have not turned away from your precepts (עדות).
I have looked upon the treacherous ones and have loathed them,
    Those who have not kept your word (אמרה).
See how I love your precepts! (פקוד).
    O Lord, revive me according to your steadfast love.
The sum of your word (דבר) is true,
    And each of your righteous ordinances is forever.

ש Strophe XXI

Princes persecute me without reason,
    But my heart fears your word (דבר).

---

[1] Read the plural following a number of Heb Mss instead of the singular.

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I exult over your word (אמרה),
    Like one who finds great spoil.
I hate and regard as abominable falsehood,
    But I love your law (תורה).
I praise you seven times each day,
    On account of your righteous ordinances (משפט).
Abundant peace is to those who love your law (תורה),
    And there is no stumbling-block to them.
I hope for your salvation, O Lord,
    For I have acted according to your commandments (מצוה).
My soul has guarded your precepts (עדות),
    And I love them exceedingly.
I have kept your precepts (פקוד) and your testimonies (עדות),
    For all my ways are before you.

ת Strophe XXII

Let my cry come before you, O Lord,
    Give me understanding according to your word (דבר).
Let my supplication come before you,
    Deliver me according to your word (אמרה).
Let my lips pour forth praise,
    Because you will teach me your statutes (חק).
My tongue will answer according to your word (אמרה),
    Because all your commandments (מצוה) are righteous.
Let your hand help me,
    Because I have chosen your precepts (פקוד).
I desire your salvation, O Lord,
    For your law (תורה) is my joy.
Give my soul life, and I will praise you,
    And allow your ordinances (משפט) to help me.
I have wandered like a lost sheep,
    Seek out your servant, for I have not forgotten your
    commandments (מצוה).

The structure of this psalm is that of an alphabetic acrostic, consisting of 22 strophes of 8 lines and 16 hemistichs. The number 8 results from the sage's penchant for the 8 major synonyms for "law" which are אמרה, דבר, מצוה, חק, עדות, תורה, משפט, and פקוד. Each strophe contains from 6 to 9 of these synonyms. In fact only 3 lines do not contain one of these words for law: 3, 90, and 122.

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In addition, the content, if not the structure, of the psalm is contained in the two introductory 'ashrê sayings, affirming once again that the central element of a wisdom psalm is one or two simple sayings which provide the basis for the development of the entire poem. Repetitions are numerous in such a lengthy psalm, but in addition to the 8 major synonyms for law, the following are frequently found: שמר/נצר, לב, צדק, זדים, בין, ירא, רשע, טוב, שכח, and חיה.

Exegesis. This sapiential psalm borrows heavily from the form of lament in which a sage asks for God to deliver him from his suffering and his persecutors, a plea based upon his extensively repeated avowal that he has been a devoted student, follower, and lover of torah, whereas his wicked persecutors have flaunted the precepts of the law. In addition, he asks for a bestowal of additional wisdom by God so that he might more closely and rigorously follow the divine commandments, and, thereby, avoid the mistakes that have precipitated his present state of suffering. His identification of Torah and wisdom, that is, his regarding of torah as the locus of true wisdom, is a hallmark of the late post-exilic sage, the most prominent example being Sirach.

It is an important point to stress that the penitential character of the contents of the psalm further illustrates a conclusion we have reached in our investigation: the wise not only

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exalted prayer as the single most important cultic act,[1] but considered themselves to be able creators and gifted speakers of prayers, based on their ability to write artistic poetry and to speak cogently, and upon their conviction that the prayer of a wise and righteous person possessed an extremely efficacious character.

D. Riddle Psalms

A third category of wisdom psalms is that of Riddle Psalms, a classification based upon the presence of one or two riddles which provide the structure and content of the developed psalm. We shall include two psalms within this category: 49 and 19A.

Psalm 49: "Mythology, Wisdom, and Divine Salvation"

Introduction. In addition to the construction of didactic psalms around the proverb and the 'ashrê saying, we also find the wise doing the same with riddles. A case in point is Psalm 49, a psalm which we have investigated extensively in another context.[2]

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[1] His penitential prayer is even metaphorically described as נדבות ("free-will offerings") in v. 108.

[2] For an analysis of this psalm and a description of the methodology for riddle analysis, see my article, "The Riddles of Psalm 49," JBL, XCIII (1974), 533-42. For a precise discussion of the three major facets of the analysis of the riddle genre, see C. Scott, "Persian and Arabic Riddles," International Journal of American Linguistics, XXXI (1965), 1-135. Among the more important studies concerning riddles in general, one should consult A. Aarne, Vergleichende Rätselforschungen, FF Communications, 26-28 (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemian Kustantama, 1918-20); H. Bausinger, Formen der 'Volkspoesie', Grundlagen der Germanistik, VI (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1968), pp. 119-30; M. Hain, Rätsel, Realienbücher für Germanisten, LIII (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1966); A. Jolles, Einfache Formen, 2nd.ed. (Halle: Niemeyer, 1956), pp. 104-23; and R. Petsch,

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The identification of this psalm as a wisdom psalm,[1] and more specifically as a riddle psalm, is based upon the occurrence of wisdom forms (the two riddles, an instruction consisting of an admonition and several result and circumstantial clauses in vv. 17-18, and a rhetorical question, v. 6), sapiential language (חידה, v. 5; משל, v. 5; חכמה, vv. 4, 11; הגות, v. 4; תבונה, v. 4; כסל, v. 11; and בעל, v. 11), and sapiential themes (the foolish and wicked rich, retribution involving punishment for the wicked rich in terms of death and the reward of salvation for the wise psalmist). Finally, the poem is artistically structured around two riddles and their solutions which we shall demonstrate as follows.

Translation and Structural Analysis.

Superscription

Concerning Death.[2] To the Choir Director.

A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

Kenntnis des Volksrätsels, Palaestra, IV (Berlin: Mayer and Müller, 1899). For literature concerning O.T. riddles, see S. H. Blank, "Riddle," IDB' IV (1962), 78-79; J. L. Crenshaw, "Wisdom," pp. 239f.; "The Riddle and Related Forms in the Old Testament" (Unpublished Manuscript, 1974); H.-P. Müller, "Der Begriff 'Rätsel' im Alten Testament," VT, XX (1970), 465-89; and H. Torczyner, "The Riddle in the Bible," HUCA, I (1924), 125-49.

[1] Psalm 49 has been typed by several scholars as a wisdom psalm (J. Fichtner, Die altorientalische Weisheit, p. 9; and R. E. Murphy, "A Consideration of the Classification 'Wisdom Psalms,'" pp. 156f.).

[2] Several scholars have correctly regarded על מות as the original superscription of Ps. 49, and not as the conclusion to Ps. 48 (e.g., Gunkel, Einleitung in die Psalmen, p. 48).

Introduction

Hear all you peoples,
    Give ear all inhabitants of the world.[1]
Both sons of affluence and sons of poverty,
    Rich and poor[2] together.
My mouth shall speak wisdom,[3]
    And the meditation of my heart, understanding.
I shall incline my ear to a proverb,
    I shall solve my riddle[4] to the tune of my lyre.[5]

Strophe I

Why should I fear evil days,[6]

---

[1] A rather interesting textual variant in one Heb Ms is חדל for חלד, thus paralleling Isa. 38:11--"inhabitants of Sheol." This variant would have our psalmist addressing even those who have been taken captive by Mot in the realm of the dead.

[2] Podechard remarks in a cogent observation: "L'opposition entre eux des termes du premier vers et le fait que les termes parallèles des collectifs occupent une place inverse dans le second ne laissant aucun doute sur le sens de בני אדם 'gens du commun' et de בני איש 'homes de condition '" ("Psaume LXIX," RB, XXXI [1922], 8).

[3] The form of חכמות has been explained by Dahood and Albright as the Phoenician form of the Hebrew חכמה (Psalms, I, 296f., and "Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom," p. 8).

[4] Kraus believes that this is an example of the inspiration of the wisdom teacher in the composition of a משל (Psalmen, I, p. 364).

[5] For an excellent discussion of the lyre as an ancient musical instrument, see Kurt Galling, "Musik," Biblische Reallexikon, I, HAT (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1937), 389-94. From ancient Near Eastern sources it is evident that the wise were at times trained in the use of various musical instruments.

[6] That such has been regarded as a rhetorical question by the Syriac translation is seen in the translation ܠܐ ܕܚܠܐ ("I shall not fear").

And the iniquity of my oppressors[1] which surrounds me?
The ones who trust in their wealth,[2]
And praise themselves in their abundant wealth?

Riddle B, part 1

Surely,[3] a (rich) man cannot redeem himself,[4]
For he is unable to give to God his ransom.
The ransom of his life[5] is costly,
So that he must come to an end forever.

Strophe II

For shall a (rich) man live forever?
Shall he not see the Pit?[6]
Surely he sees that even the wise man will die,
Along with the fool and the brute who perish.
Their tomb[7] is their home forever,
Their tents for generation after generation.
Though they have called lands by their own names,[8]

---

[1] Read עקבי ("oppressors") for MT עקבי ("feet, heels") on the basis of Origen's hexapla and the Syriac translation.

[2] For the relative usage of the article, see Gesenius, no. 126, p. 404.

[3] Read with 8 Heb MSS אַךְ for אָח.

[4] Read the niphal יִפָּדֶה for qal יִפְדֶּה (cf. Kraus, _op. cit._).

[5] Read with the LXX נפשו ("his soul") for MT נפשם.

[6] שחת is an epithet for Sheol (cf. Job 33:25; Ps. 16:10).

[7] Read קברם for קרבם with the LXX, Syriac, and Targum.

[8] Omit the ב with the LXX and Syriac. Kraus observes: "Ein alter Rechtsbrauch bestand darin, dass im Akte der Ubereignung der Name des neuen Eigentümers über einem Objekt ausgerufen wurde. M ist durch die Phrase קרא בשם irregeführt worden " (_op. cit._).

They will leave to others their wealth.

Solution A[1]

A wealthy man cannot abide,[1]
He is like fattened cattle who are butchered.

Strophe III

This is their way, the "confidence"[2] which is to them,
This is the way[3] of those who have self-confidence.
Like sheep they have been appointed[4] to Sheol,
Mot will pasture and rule over them![5]
Their form[6] will waste away,[7]
Sheol will be their prince![8]

Riddle B, part 2

Surely God will redeem me,
For he will take me from the hand of Sheol.

---

[1] I accept the MT ילין ("abide"). Cf. Job 17:2, 19:4. The LXX and Syriac try to make v. 13 and v. 21 a refrain. Such an attempt demonstrates that they are removing difficulties in translation, a frequent textual error.

[2] כסל ("confidence"--Job 31:24) also has the meaning of "stupidity" (Ecc. 7:25).

[3] Read אחרות for אחורים due to the parallelism with דרכם in the preceding hemistich, or possibly אחריתם ("their end") with the Targum and Syriac.

[4] BDB locates שתו as a qal of שתת and translates: "They have been appointed like sheep for Sheol."

[5] ישרים לבקר should be taken as an apocalypitc addition.

[6] Read the Qere for the Kethibh (צורם for צירם).

[7] היה + ל plus the infinitive (or understood) implies "to become something, i.e. to meet with a particular fate" (Gesenius no. 114k, p. 349).

[8] We have taken מזבל to be a participle of זבל , "prince."

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Strophe IV

Do not fear when a man becomes rich,
When the glory of his house may increase.
For when he dies, he will take nothing with him,
His glory shall not follow after him.
While he is alone, his life may be blessed,
And he may even praise you[1] saying there is benefit to you also.
But he shall pass away[2] unto the generations of his fathers;
The wealthy man shall never again see[3] the light of day.

Riddle A

A rich man is like cattle, for he has no understanding,
He is like the fattened cattle who are dumb.[4]

In this psalm we have an artistically contrived riddle psalm consisting of an introduction and four strophes structured around two riddles (A, B) and one solution (A^1). The psalmist, having assembled his audience, announces that he is about to "unlock" or solve (אפתח) a riddle,[5] and though he does not specifically state what that riddle is, it is our opinion that the solved riddle is contained in v. 21 and its solution in v. 13. Now a number of scholars have considered vv. 13 and 21 to be a refrain,[1] and have changed one of the two verses to conform exactly to the other, but if we listen closely to the text, such changes destroy the binary structure of the artistic riddle and its solution.

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[1] Read with the Syriac, V, and ξ, יוֹדְךָ for MT יוֹדֶךָ.

[2] Read יבוא for MT תבוא.

[3] Read יראה for יראו with LXX and Syriac.

[4] We suggest reading בָּקָר for בִּיקָר and keeping יבין. For our pointing of the riddle and its solution, consult "The Riddles of Psalm 49," pp. 538, notes 27-29.

[5] Against Müller ("Der Begriff 'Rätsel,'" pp. 481-82, note 5) who argues ḥidāti should be yiḥîdatî ("my innermost self").

Riddle A (1st hemistich)	אדם בקר ולא יבין
Solution A^1 (1st hemistich)	ואדם ביקר בל-ילין
Riddle A (2nd hemistich)	נמשל כבהמות נדמו
Solution A^1 (2nd hemistich)	נמשל כבהמות נדמו

That the vv. (13,21) consist of a riddle and its solution may be argued from the following. First of all, as concerns texture, these verses exhibit poetic features characteristic of the riddle genre: the meter of the riddle and its solution is 3 + 3, the typical binary construction of a riddle and its solution is present, both the riddle and the solution consists of one stich with two hemistichs, and in terms of syllabification each of the 4 hemistichs appear to have 8 syllables. As concerns rhyme, assonance, and alliteration, note the following:

	Z	Y	X
Riddle A--	וְלֹא יָבִין	בָּקָר	אָדָם
Solution A^1	בַּל יָלִין	בִּיקָר	וְאָדָם
Riddle A--	נָדַמּוּ	כִּבְהֵמוֹת	נִמְשַׁל
Solution A^1	נִדְמוּ	כַּבְּהֵמוֹת	נִמְשַׁל

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[1] B. Duhm, Die Psalmen, p. 202; Gunkel, Die Psalmen, p. 209; and H.-J. Kraus, Psalmen, I, pp. 362-3.

Synonymous parallelism is most noticeable between the hemistichs in the riddle and the two in the solution. Finally, metaphor and simile are recognized, for man is said to be an "ox" and "like fattened cattle." Secondly, as concerns the formal definition of the riddle, a riddler takes one characteristic feature of his subject and attempts to state it obscurely enough to mislead his audience into seeking the answer in the common language, while the real answer, disguised in certain keys given in the riddle itself, is to be derived from the _Sondersprache_ of the riddler or his group. If we place the riddle in the form of a question, we have: "How is an unperceiving man like a dumb animal"? In terms of common language, one would expect the answer to be: "They are both stupid." However, such a response has no meaning in the context of the psalm, so that in turning to the solution in v. 13, as well as the superscription, the real answer is "They both die." Yet the wit of the psalmist is not as yet fully completed, for our wise psalmist in the course of his psalm has considered the word איש to be a key word for a wealthy man; thus he is referring to a particular group of men, that is the wealthy, and he makes the point that the wealthy, like their fattened beasts which they fatten for sumptuous dining, grow fat, but also like their domesticated animals they are dumb as well, for they fail to understand that they, like their fattened cattle, are being fattened for the crushing jaws of "Prince Death" (cf. Koh. 3:18.). Thus it is being fattened for death, the cattle for their aristocratic owners and the rich for the banquet of prince Mot, that is the one factor

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which makes the two subjects, the rich and their cattle, an essential unity. The riddler therefore exploits an unexpected ironic relation between the wealthy and their cattle. So a wise man has taken a riddle from sapiential lore, and, in the course of his writing, has developed an artistically constructed psalm from the riddle and has given to the riddle an explicit reference to the wealthy.

Now it is our opinion that the structural analysis of this psalm supports our conclusion concerning vv. 13 and 21. Leaving aside the introductory strophe, the body of the psalm consists of 4 strophes, each of which has 4 stichs and 8 hemistichs with each stich having 3 + 3 meter. The riddle of v. 21 and the solution, v. 13, are not placed in any one of the 4 strophes, but rather we find them placed at the end of the second and fourth strophes, serving as strophic demarcations. Thus it appears that a skilled poet has taken a one stich, two hemistich riddle and an identically formed solution with 3 + 3 meter and equal syllabification (8 + 8 = 8 + 8) and has built a 4 strophe psalm, each of which has 4 stichs and 8 hemistichs.

But we have also concluded that in the course of his didactic psalm, the wise riddler has proposed a second riddle which he leaves to his puzzled audience to unravel. We propose that this second riddle is found in vss. 8 and 16[1] which fit together quite smoothly on the basis of texture, thought, and structural position, since each stich concludes a major strophe:

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[1] Several scholars erroneously have suggested vs. 16 may be a gloss (Gunkel, Die Psalmen, p. 310; and W. O. E. Oesterley, The Psalms, I (London: SPCK, 1939), p. 16). For an analysis of this riddle in terms of texture and definition, as well as our repointing, see "The Riddles of Psalm 49," pp. 540-541.

Riddle B אך לא-פדה יפדה איש לא יתן לא להם כפרו
v. 8 Surely a man cannot redeem himself, he cannot give his ransom to God.
אך אלהים יפדה נפשי מיד שאול כי יקחני
v. 16 Surely God will redeem my soul; certainly he will take me from the hand of Sheol.

The psalmist has constructed a paradoxical engima: death is the one state from which neither rich nor poor, foolish nor wise can be ransomed (vv. 7-10), and yet our sage affirms that he is an exception, that is, he will not suffer death. Now the key to the riddle is embedded in the language he has used to speak of his ransoming from death: מיד שאול כי יקחני. In the "translation" stories of Enoch and Elijah, the same verb, לקח, is used to speak of God's taking these rather strange and enigmatic people from this life into the heavenly realm, thus allowing them to escape death (Gen. 5:24, I Kgs. 2:1).[1] Thus the psalmist seems to be speaking of the same redemption by God that these two figures experienced. Now the question which confronts us is "Why"? Suggestions of piety and faith are possible, but are never explicitly stated. To understand the intention of the wise man, it is important to refer to Jolles' masterful analysis of the "life and death" situation in which riddles are found, a situation so strongly depicted in this psalm. Now within the context of many ancient Near Eastern myths and legends, one finds a number of legendary wise and primordial heroes who succeed or fail in their efforts to gain eternal life or divine status by obtaining the secretive wisdom of the gods: Adam, Enoch, Adapa, Etana, Noah, Utnapishtim, and Gilgamesh. Perhaps the best parallel to our psalm is the myth of Utnapishtim who is saved from the flood and eventually given a place as a deity in the heavenly world by learning the secretive wisdom of the gods concerning the imminent deluge revealed to him by the god of wisdom, Ea. When Utnapishtim asks what he should tell the city of Shuruppak concerning his activities in building the ship, Ea responds with an enigmatic oracle which, on the surface, seems to mean Utnapishtim will be forced from the city to dwell with Ea while Shuruppak will be blessed with prosperity. However, due to the wordplays involving kukku and kibāti, which mean both "food" and "misfortune," the real implication of the oracle, recognized only by Utnapishtim because of his instruction in the secret by Ea, is coming destruction. Lacking Utnapishtim's knowledge and insight, the people fail to discern the oracle's true meaning and are consequently destroyed in the deluge. Of course, Utnapishtim is saved from the flood's destruction and is eventually deified.[1]

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[1] Dahood, Psalms, I, p. 301. For examples of sapiential interest in Enoch, see Sir. 49:14 and the Wisdom of Solomon, 4:10f. Sirach also refers to Elijah's journey into heaven (48:9).

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[1] See ANET, p. 93, note 190. The oracle Utnapishtim is to deliver reads:

> I have learned that Enlil is hostile to me,
> So that I cannot reside in your city,
> Nor set my f(oo)t in Enlil's territory
> To the Deep I will therefore go down,
> To dwell with my lord Ea.
> (But upon) you he will shower down abundance,
> (The choicest) birds, the rarest fishes,

Now it may well be that our sage is referring to a similar situation in that, because of his secretive wisdom which he alone possesses, he is sure of his ransom from death, whereas his foolish audience, including especially the despised rich, are doomed to languish forever within the grip of Mot and Sheol.

Psalm 19A: "Riddles Concerning the Cosmos and the Sun God"

Introduction. Though almost every major scholar of the Psalms has typed this psalm as a hymn,[1] we shall argue that Psalm 19A (19:1-7) should be classified as a wisdom psalm, and in terms of structural analysis, as a riddle psalm, since the structure of the psalm is formed around two cosmological riddles (Riddle A, vv. 4-5 ab; Riddle B, vv. 6-7 ab) and their respective answers.[2] Our classification once more is supported by the presence of sapiential forms (the occurrence of two riddles), and wisdom themes (God as creator, the knowledge of the God of creation by means of his created order, and the metaphorical depiction of the sun god as the retributive judge and overseer of world order).

(The land shall have its fill) of harvest riches.
(He who at dusk orders) the husk-greens,
Will shower down upon you a rain of wheat.

[1] Dahood, Psalms, I, 31, Gunkel, Die Psalmen, p. 74, and Kraus, Psalmen, p. 152.

[2] Torczyner was the first to argue in a cogent fashion that the psalm contained two riddles, and while his analysis of the first riddle and solution parallels ours, his analysis of the second differs slightly in that he has considered v. 7 to be the riddle and 5c-6 to be the solution ("The Riddle in the Bible," HUCA, I [1924], 141f.).

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Translation and Structural Analysis.

Superscription

To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David

Strophe I

Solution A^1 (1) The heavens recount the glory of El,
(2) And the firmament proclaims the work of his hand.
(3) Day pours forth speech unto day,
(4) And night declares knowledge unto night.

Riddle A (1) There is no speech, and there are no words;
(2) Their voice is not heard.
(3) Yet throughout all the earth their speech goes forth,[1]
(4) And their words unto the end of the world.

Strophe II

Solution B^1 (1) Concerning the sun (Shamash) who pitches his tent in the sea,[2]
(2) And nothing is hidden from his heat.[3]

Riddle B (1) He is like a bridegroom who goes forth from his bridal chamber.
(2) He is like a strong man who exults when running his course.
(3) His gate is found at the end of the heavens.
(4) And his circuit extends to their end.

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[1] BH^3 suggests reading קולם for קום. However Kraus may be correct in arguing the MT should be maintained, since קו means "sound" or "speech" in Isa. 28:10, 13 (op. cit., p. 155).

[2] We are following BH^3 which suggests reading בים ("in the sea") for בהם ("in them").

[3] We propose that 7a should follow 5c as the second half of the solution (B^1) to riddle B.

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The classification of A as a poetic riddle may be concluded from the application of our methodology for genre analysis of riddles. In terms of the definition of a riddle, A is an obvious enigmatic paradox which contains a contradiction: apparently, people are able to speak, be heard, and are understood, and yet do so without the formulation of words or the utterance of audible sounds. Thus the task of the riddler's audience is to determine an answer that may possibly remove the paradox, and to make sense out of what appears as an irreconcilable paradox. They must ask themselves: "What speaks and is understood, and yet without language or the utterance of sounds"? With regard to content, the riddle and, as we shall see, its answer should be considered as a cosmological riddle, paralleled by the "impossible questions" in Job 38–39. The texture of the riddle and its solution (A^1) exhibits the typical binary construction. The riddle itself is a chiasm, (1) = (4) and (2) = (3),[1] which consists of four hemistichs paralleled by the four hemistichs in the solution. Other elements pertaining to texture include the repetition of certain key words and synonyms (אין; רקיע, שמים; יום, לילה; יביע, יהוה; אמר, דברים, מליהם; מגיד, מספרים; קולם, קום; and ארץ, תבל), assonance in the third (qâmeṣ) and fourth (ṣerê) hemistichs of the riddle, and 4 + 3 meter.

The solution given is the idea of creation and the orderly cycle of time which, though they utter no audible sounds nor proclaim human speech, still speak a "language " which is understood by all as praise to the creator of the structured order of creation, a typical wisdom motif. The psalmist has given this riddle a hymnic character to praise the creator deity, El, for the order of his creation.

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[1] See Riddersbos, Die Psalmen, p. 58.

Strophe II also consists entirely of a riddle (B) and its solution (B[1]). B is a mythic, cosmological riddle. The circuit of the sun god in his journey through the expanse of the heavens is metaphorically described as a virile bridegroom leaving his bridal chamber to run his path through the heavens. The texture of the riddle and its solution involves the typical binary construction, 4 + 4 meter, and the repetition of three different synonyms for "tent": אֹהֶל, חֻפָּה, and חמת.[1] The riddle itself contains two stichs, or 4 hemistichs which exhibit synonymous parallelism, while the solution possesses one line, or two hemistichs.

After the audience places the riddle in an interrogative form, they must determine who or what possesses the characteristics of a virile bridegroom who runs unexhaustingly a course which extends from one horizon to the other. The special language of the riddle is to be found in A.N.E. mythological texts which speak of the sun-god as a "hero, mighty man"[2] who travels by chariot, boat, horse, or wings his circuit across the expanse of the skies and dwells at night in its abode in the sea.[1] Thus "tent" (Bridal-chamber, חפה),[2] "heavens " (שמים), and "mighty man, hero" (גבור) are the key words which should "unlock" the riddle and provide the answer: "the sun (Shamash) who pitches his tent in the sea, and nothing is hidden from his heat." The poetic stich which explains the answer, "Concerning the sun (Shamash)," states that the sun god dwells in the sea in his tent (חנות), and that nothing is hidden from his all-seeing rays (חמת).

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[1] חמת is probably a word play since the term may mean "heat" as well as "tent" (Cf. Ugaritic hmt).

[2] VAT 8249 (Otto Schroeder, "Zu Psalm 19," ZAW, XXXIV [1914], 69-70).

Exegesis. As suggested above, the two strophes are fashioned from two cosmological riddles and their respective solutions which borrow heavily from ancient Near Eastern mythological texts.[3] Strophe I speaks of the "heavens," the "firmament," "day," and "night" as a divine choir made up of members of the royal astral entourage of the council of El, and are comparable to other mythologically influenced Hebrew texts (Pss. 89:5-6, 97:6, 148:1f., and Job 38:7), as well as to the P account of creation and the Akkadian Creation myth (especially Tablets IV-VI) which speaks of the divine praise of Marduk following his destruction of Tiamat and the creation and ordering of the cosmos.[1] The strophe is also similar to several Ugaritic texts, especially "The Birth of the Gods," in which Dawn and Dusk, given birth by the wives of El, take their place in the heavens, and receive Shapsh and the stars.[2] Thus it may well be the "day" and "night" parallel these two Canaanite astral deities who give praise to El, their progenitor. Furthermore, the idea of "night" and "day" pouring forth speech (יביע)[3] and declaring knowledge intimates not only the sapiential theme that they instruct their successors in the proper cosmological cycle of time throughout the calendrical year, but also that they reveal to the sapiential observer the creator who ordered their existence.

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[1] For a discussion of Shamash, see Ringgren, Religions of the Ancient Near East, pp. 57f.

[2] For the reference to the bridal-chamber of Shamash, see "The Hymn to Shamash," l. 200, BWL, p. 138.

[3] For a discussion of the mythological character of the psalm, see J. Morgenstern, "Psalms 8 and 19A," HUCA, XIX (1945/46), 491-523.

Another mythological text which parallels our riddle is the second half of a speech of Baal made to Anat through Baal's divine messengers:

I've a word I fain would tell thee,
    A speech I would utter to thee:
Speech of tree and whisper of stone,
    Converse of heaven with earth,
    E'en of the deeps with the stars;
Yea a thunderbolt unknown to heaven,
    A word not known to men,
    Nor sensed by the masses on earth.
Come, pray, and I will reveal it
    In the midst of my mount Godly Zaphon:
In the sanctuary, mount of my portion,
    In the pleasance, the hill I possess.[4]

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[1] ANET, pp. 66f.

[2] UT 52.

[3] נבע is found to mean "to burst forth in ecstatic praise" (cf. Pss. 119:171, 145:7), as well as "to speak riddles" (Ps. 78:2).

[4] UT, 'NT, III, 18f. For a discussion, see A. Jirku, "Die

As is the case in our riddle, this text also speaks of a "language" of nature which speaks a riddle known in this case only to Baal.

The second riddle (B) also borrows heavily from the imagery and language of ancient Near Eastern mythology, in this case, the mythology of the sun-god who in ancient cosmology "disappeared" each day when he descended into his nightly abode in the sea in the West there to illuminate the underworld, only to appear the following day on the Eastern horizon to repeat its heavenly journey across the expanse of the heavens. For example, the references in Akkadian literature to Shamash as a "mighty man," as the judge of the universe "from whom no deeds are hid," as the one who enters the "gate of Heaven" to "traverse the Heavens," to his route which covers the earth, to his descent into the deep, and to his bridal chamber parallel the language and thought of our riddle,[1] thus leading us to suggest that such a riddle concerns the sun god Shamash, even as the first riddle is based on the Canaanite deity El.[2]

Sprache des Gottheit in der Natur," ThLZ, LXXVI (1951), 631.

[1] Kraus concurs that the text has been influenced by the Shamash tradition (op. cit., p. 156).

[2] The relationship between myth and wisdom has not yet been rigorously examined, and certainly the numerous instances of mythological ideas and symbols point to the knowledge and use of myth by the wise. Hopefully, such a study will soon be undertaken. For initial efforts, see H.-P Müller, Hiob und Seine Freunde, ThST, CV (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1970), 27-54.

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CHAPTER VI

THE COMPLETION OF OUR TASK

A. Introduction

It has been our primary task to demonstrate in our analyses of the views of cult in the wisdom literatures of the ancient Near East the tenuous position of earlier scholarly generalizations picturing the wise as a body of international, cosmopolitan humanists and secularists who functioned with empirical and rational epistemologies, were indifferent to the sphere of cult and its demands for confrontation and participation, were often disdainful of cultic observances and participants, and negatively criticized matters of cult. We believe these are tenuous generalizations, lacking any real foundation in the primary texts themselves. Now it is true that not every sage tended to view cultic matters in the same way, for we have found differences in viewpoints with respect to cult, its values, validity, theological bases, practices, and observances. However, with relatively few exceptions, almost every piece of sapiential literature in the ancient Near East deals with cultic matters in substantive, not merely incidental, ways. In fact only one piece of ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature, the Mesopotamian "Dialogue of Pessimism," castigates the values and validity of the cultic sphere. However, this is not surprising, since the section on cult in this wisdom text is embedded in a series

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of exchanges between a master and his slave which deny the possibility of discovering meaning and a certain security in human existence. Thus, even here cultic religion is not singled out as the solitary whipping boy for the sapiential flagellation of this Mesopotamian sage, since every human activity deemed important by the traditional sages is satirically attacked.

Thus from the massive documentation to which we have referred in the preceeding chapters, we must conclude, first of all, that the sages did not extricate themselves from the sphere of cultic religion, but rather seriously reflected over and often participated in its theology and practices.

B. The Approaches of the Wise to Cultic Religion

Cult as a compartment of Order. In returning to our introductions to the thought world of the wise in the ancient Near East, we have indicated that wisdom is the quest for self-understanding, an understanding derived from the sapiential exploration of the wise man's relationships with the various compartments of an ordered reality--creation (the phenomena of the natural world), society (persons, social groups, institutions), and deity (god or gods of creation, order, and retribution). As the wise man reflected on the segments of reality, he posited the idea of an all embracing order, most often defined in terms of justice and truth, which permeated reality and served as the cohesive structure of a well integrated whole of the elements of reality. Each element of reality was believed to have its own laws and regulations for existence and its orderly functioning within the gamut of world order. By observing the elements of order, the task of the wise man became, first of all, that of setting forth in sapiential language these rules and laws which he believed governed each component of order; secondly, to observe and follow the dictates of order with the purpose of integrating himself harmoniously within the composite structure of reality; and, thirdly, to experience the beneficence which he attributed to the areas of order. Thus wisdom was the key which enabled the wise man to find his own place, function, and time within the beneficent spheres of world order. This quest for self-understanding was motivated by the desire of the wise to master life, that is, to know how and when to act with respect to every conceivable situation, so that a semblance of security in his personal existence might be obtained in what was very often an insecure world. If his quest was successful, the wise man knew who he was and what his tasks in life were, and he could expect to experience the security and joys of what is often referred to as the state of well-being, or more simply, the "good."

Now it has been suggested by many scholars that the efforts of the wise to understand every conceivable element of reality were comprehensive in their scope, so that every segment of reality came within the aegis of the sage's analysis. And, as we have demonstrated, the realm of the cult was no exception, for this segment of reality also came under the investigative efforts of the sage, not simply in flippant or disdainful, but rather in substantive ways. In

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addition, the sage does not simply borrow the priestly teachings and understandings concerning the matters of cult, but rather the various components of cult are given reflective sapiential analyses, and, consequently, bear what is often a demonstrative sapiential character. Thus when the wise reflect over and submit conclusions about an element of the cultic compartment of world order, these very often bear a sapiential stamp.[1]

Elements of cult in ancient Near Eastern Wisdom Literature. In examining the references to the various elements of the cultic sphere, it is apparent that almost every major element of cult is mentioned by the wise. The following should serve not only as a useful index to the references to the elements of cult in wisdom texts, but should underline in a conclusive way the importance of the matters of cult in sapiential literature:

I. References to Elements of Cult in Egyptian and Mesopotamian Wisdom Literature

Sacred Rituals:

General References: Sumerian Proverbs 2.1; Babylonian Theodicy, 135, 219; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, I, 104, II, 17, 29, IV (?), 101; Dialogue of Pessimism, 61; The Tamarisk and the Palm, b, Reverse, 3; Assyrian Proverbs, BM 38596=80-11-12, 480, I. 2-9.

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[1] One prominent example of this, already discussed earlier, is the basis upon which idolatry is condemned by the sages. Idolatry is not condemned as a breaking of cultic apodictic law, nor as an act considered to be cultically "abominable," nor as a cultic practice upon which is placed the destructive power of the curse, but rather idolatry is condemned by the wise primarily on the basis that such a cultic practice was considered to be foolish and contrary to reason.

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Sacrifices and Offerings: Ipu-wer, viii, 12f.; xi, 2f.; Meri-ka-Re, 65f., 128f.; Dialogue of a Man with his Soul, 146; Ani, iii, 5f., iv, 1f. vii, 12; Amen-em-Opet, ii, 1f.; 'Onchsheshonqy, Col. 14, 1.10; Papyrus Insinger, 16:1; Advice to a Prince, 44; Counsels of Wisdom, 136f.; Counsels of a Pessimist, 12; Shamash Hymn, 14, 151, 172f., 196, 197; Babylonian Theodicy, V, 51-55; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, II, 20, 24, IV (?), 93, 94, 100; Dialogue of Pessimism, 55f.; The Ox and the Horse, C, 7; Fable of the Fox, Z, Reverse, 10; Nisaba and Wheat, Reverse IV, 10; Babylonian Proverbs, R. Borger, Asarhaddon, 105. 29-30.

Libations: Ipu-wer, xi, 1; Meri-ka-Re, 129f.; 'Onchsheshonqy, Col. 14, 1. 10; Papyrus Insinger 16:1; Sumerian Proverbs; Shamash Hymn, 157f.; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, II, 12, IV (?), 95, 97; The Tamarisk and the Palm, A, Reverse, 9, b, Reverse, 2.

Incense: Ipu-wer, xi, 1; Ani, iii, 5f., vii, 16, 17; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, IV (?), 92; The Tamarisk and the Palm, b, Reverse, 7.

Ablutions and other Rites of Purification and Desacralization: Ipu-wer, xi, 3f.; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, III, 24f.; IV (?), 26, 88; Dialogue of Pessimism, 54; The Tamarisk and the Palm, A, Reverse, 6, b, Reverse, 7, c, 6; Babylonian Proverbs, R. Borger, Asarhaddon, 105. 29-30.

Egyptian Mortuary Rituals: Hor-dedef; Ptah-hotep, 298f.; The Dialogue between a Man and his Soul; A Harper's Song; Ipu-wer, iii, 5f., vii, 3f., xiii, 10; Meri-ka-Re, 69f., 77f., 127f.; Amen-em-het, iii, 1f.; Sehetep-ib-Re, 18f.; In Praise of Learned Scribes; Ani, iv, 14f.; Amen-em-Opet, ii, 9f., x, 21-xi, 1, 5, xxiv, 17; 'Onchsheshonqy, Col. 12, 1. 5; Papyrus Insinger, 2:9-11, 16:2.

Pharaonic Cult: Ptah-hotep, 38, 199, 593f.; Ipu-wer, vii, 3f.; Amen-em-het, 1f.; Instruction of a man for his Son; Instruction of Sehetep-ib-Re.

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Divination, Exorcism, and Incantation: Ipu-wer, vi, 7f.; Meri-ka-Re, 136f.; Sumerian Proverbs, 1. 70, 2. 4; Shamash Hymn, 53-54, 129, 151, 155; Babylonian Theodicy, V, 49; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, I, 49-54, II, 108-111, III, 1f., Si 55 (q), Reverse, 4f., IV (?), 84f.

Sacred Psalms (Hymns):

Ipu-wer, vii, 13f.; Meri-ka-Re, 131f.; The Instruction of Sehetep-ib-Re; Sumerian Proverbs, 1. 70; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, I, 1f.; Nisaba and Wheat, Reverse, IV.

Sacred Prayers:

General References: Ani, iii, 5f., iv, 1f.; Amen-em-Opet, x, 11f.; 'Onchsheshonqy, Col. 28, l. 10, Col. 24, l. 11; Papyrus Insinger, 29:1; Counsels of Wisdom, 136f.; Counsels of a Pessimist, 11f.; Shamash Hymn, 130f., 163f.; Babylonian Theodicy, IV, 39, VII, 71, 73; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, II, 3-15, 23-24, 27, III, 52, IV (?), 76-77, 91; Nisaba and Wheat, Reverse, IV, 21; Fable of the Fox, Z, Reverse, 11, 14; Akkadian Popular Sayings, VAT 8807, Reverse, IV, 4, 13; BM 53309 and BM 53555, 5.

Lament-Thanksgiving Cycle: The Dialogue of a Man with his Soul, 20f., 86-149; Amen-em-Opet, vii, 7-10; Papyrus Insinger 29:2; A Man and his God; Babylonian Theodicy, XXVII, 295f.; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom.

Sacred Seasons:

Ipu-wer, xi, 4; Ani, iii, 3f.; Shamash Hymn, 156f.; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, II, 16, 24; The Tamarisk and the Palm, A, Reverse, 13, b, Reverse, 8; Akkadian Popular Sayings, BM 53309 and BM 53555, 6-7.

Sacred Drama:

Processions: Meri-ka-Re, 125; Ani, vii, 12; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, II, 25.

Dancing: Ani, iii, 5f.

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Sacred Places (Temples):

The Dialogue of a Man with his Soul, 143f.; Ipu-wer, xi, 3, xiii, 10; Meri-ka-Re, 63, 110, 135; Ani, iv. if.; Amen-em-Opet, vi, 1, vii, 7-10, x, 21; 'Onchsheshonqy 8, 1. 18; Advice to a Prince, 55f.; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, Commentary, o-p, IV (?), 77f.; The Tamarisk and the Palm, A, Reverse, 6; Sumerian Proverbs 1. 142, 2. 61a, 2. 69; Fable of the Willow, K 13771, 12; Nisaba and Wheat, Obverse, I, 13-15; Fable of the Fox, Z, Reverse, 8; Akkadian Popular Sayings, VAT 8807, Reverse, III, 15.

Sacred Paraphernalia (images, altars, etc.):

Ipu-wer, xi, 3f., Meri-ka-Re, 63, 125; Ani, vii, 12f.

Sacred Personnel:

Ipu-wer, xi, 4, 5; Meri-ka-Re, 63; Amen-em-Opet, ii, 15f.; 'Onchsheshonqy, 8, 1. 18, 24, 1. 11; A Man and his God, 67; Sumerian Proverbs, 1. 63, 2. 54, 2. 69, 2. 97 - 2. 106; Advice to a Prince, 55-56; Shamash Hymn, 53-54, 155, 195; Babylonian Theodicy, the acrostic; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, II, 6-9, 108-111, III, 1f.; The Tamarisk and the Palm, A, Reverse, 6, b, Obverse, 26, Reverse, 7, c, 36; The Ox and the Horse, A, Reverse, 6; Fable of the Fox, E, Obverse, I, 12, 18; Akkadian Popular Sayings, VAT 8807, Reverse IV, 3-5; Proverbs, Assyrian Collection, ii, 27-28.

Sacred Texts:

Ipu-wer, vi, 6f., xi, 4; Meri-ka-Re, 51, 63, 87, 130; Ani iii, 5f.; Counsels of Wisdom, 73f.; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, III, 41f.

II. References to Elements of Cult in Israelite Wisdom Literature

Sacred Rituals:

General: Koh. 8:10.

Sacrifices and Offerings: Prov. 3:9-10, 7:14-15, 9:2f., 15:8, 17:1, 21:3, 27; Job 1:5, 33:24, 42:8; Koh. 4:17, 9:2; Sir. 7:31, 14:11, 30:19, 34:18, 19, 20, 35:1-9, 12, 38:11, 45:14, 16, 20-21, 46:16, 47:2, 50:12, 14; Wis. 18:8.

Libations: Prov. 9:2f.; Sir. 50:14-15.

Incense: Sir. 24:15, 45:16; Wis. 18:21.

Cultic Meals: Prov. 7:14f., 9:2f., 17:1; possibly Job 1:4f.

Vows: Prov. 7:14, 20:25, 31:2; Job 22:27; Koh. 5:3-4; Sir. 18:22f.

Fasting: Sir. 34:26.

Ablutions and other Rites of Purification and Desacralization: Job 1:4-5, 9:30-31, 22:30; Koh. 9:2; Sir. 34:24-25, 45:15.

Divination: Prov. 16:10, 33; Koh. 5:2, 6; Sir. 34:1-8

Sacred Psalms (Hymns):

General References: Job 36:24; Sir. 15:9-10, 32:13, 36:14, 43:28f., 47:8, 10.

Hymns: Prov. 3:19-20, 8, 9; Job 5:9f., 9:4f., 12:13f., 26:5f., 36:24f.; Sir. 1:1f., 4:11-19, 24:1-29, 16:24-17:14, 39:12-35, 42:15-43:3; Ps. 19A.

Sacred Prayer:[1]

General References: Prov. 15:8, 29, 28:9; Job 31:26-28, 33:24f., 42:8-10; Koh. 5:1-2; Sir. 3:5, 4:6, 7:10, 14, 17:25, 28:2, 34:24, 26, 36:17, 37:15, 38:14, 34, 39:5-6, 46:4f., 16f., 47:5f., 50:19, Wis. 7:7-8, 8:21, 11:3-4, 18:21.

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[1] It appears that the cultic action deemed most important by the wise was prayer, which we have argued is not based on "spiritualizing" or "individualizing" tendencies of the wise with respect to cult, but rather is connected to the fact that the sages most often speak of cultic concepts and practices which are more closely akin to their own perspectives. Thus, a sage, trained in proper speech, able to compose, because of his training, cultic prayers, and indoctrinated in the dogma concerning the efficaciousness of the prayers of the righteous, would find in prayer the most important and most conducive cultic action to the pious devotions and sagacious worship. This major interest of the wise in cultic practices and ideas which most readily corresponded with their own thinking and behavior may also be seen in the references to the communion sacrifices, the vows, and the genre of the hymn, especially those hymns which concern creation and retribution.

The Lament-Thanksgiving Cycle: Joban Dialogues, Sir. 17:25-29, 21:5, 35:13-20, 38:9f., 47:8, 48:20f., 51:9, 11; Wis. 16:27-29; 19:22; Pss. 19B, 32, 34, 73.

Prayers for Guidance or Wisdom: Sir. 22:27-23:6, 39:5-6, 51:13; Wis. 9:1-18.

Sacred Seasons: Prov. 7:20; Sir. 33:7-9, 47:10, 50:5f.; Wis. 18:6f.

Sacred Places (Temple): Prov. 9:1f., 14, 17:1; Job 33:26; Koh. 4:17, 8:10; Sir. 24:10f., 36:13f., 45:9, 24, 47:10, 13, 49:6, 12, 50:1-2, 7, 11, 51:14; Wis. 9:8-9.

Sacred Paraphernalia (Lots, Lampstand, Altar, Temple Curtain): Prov. 16:33; Sir. 26:17, 33:3, 45:10, 47:9, 49:8, 50:5, 11-16; Wis. 9:9.

Sacred Personnel: Job 12:19, 33:23; Koh. 5:5; Sir. 7:29-31, 44:5, 45:6-26, 47:9, 49:12, 50:1-24; Wis. 18:20-25.

Sacred Texts (Torah, Commandments): Prov. 28:9; Koh. 5:5; Sir. 1:26, 3:22, 6:37, 9:15, 10:19, 15:1, 15, 17:11, 19:17, 20, 24, 21:3, 11, 23:23, 27, 24:23, 28:6-7, 29:1, 32:15, 23-24, 33:2-3, 34:8, 35:1, 37:12, 39:1, 8, 41:8, 42:2, 44:20, 45:5f., 17, 46:14, 49:4; Wis. 9:9, 16:6, 18:9.

Illicit Cults and Cultic Practices: Prov. 7, 9; Job 31:26-28; Sir. 30:18-19, 34:1-8; Wis. 11:15-26, 12:23-27, 13:1-16:1, 18:13.

Motivations for Cultic Participation. In the reflections and instructions of the wise with respect to matters of cult, we often find a number of motivations which prompt the adherents of wisdom to participate in cultic observances. As we have stated, the primary motivation which is repeatedly given is the one based on the overwhelming desire to enjoy the beneficence which comes to those who have observed the laws and rules regulating the various elements of cult, a beneficence

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administered through the conduit of the principle of retribution. Those who faithfully and correctly observed cultic legislation and rituals were believed to enjoy the blessings derived from orderly existence. Thus we find the traditional wise affirming the validity of cult to produce beneficence for the cultically observant. The wise not only affirmed the beneficence-working sphere of the cult, but in addition believed that cultic devotion gave to the wise man the basis for divine aid in deliverance from the powers of evil.[1]

A second oft found motivation for cultic observance is the desire to avoid the destructive wrath of the gods which is incurred against those who are cultically negligent, demonstrating again the sapiential affirmation of a cultic dogma for a component of the *raison d'être* of cult.[2]

Thirdly, the wise were motivated to participate in cult by their sagacious teachers not only in terms of gaining the blessings which flow forth to the cultic observant and of avoiding the destructive anger of the gods consuming those who neglect the cultic sphere, but also by an appeal to their social conscience, for the priests as well as the poor received their sustenance from the sacrifices and offerings given to the cult.[1]

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[1] See Meri-ka-Re, 63f.; The Instruction of a Man for his Son, 8-9, 18-19; Sehetep-ib-Re; Ani, iii, 3-9; Amen-em-Opet, x, 13f.; 'Onchsheshonqy, Col. 6, 1.1, Col. 18, 1.17; Papyrus Insinger, 10:1, 29:1-2; The Counsels of Wisdom, 135-147; The Counsels of a Pessimist, 131; The Shamash Hymn, 100; The Babylonian Theodicy, II, 21-22; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, IV (?); Prov. 3:9-10; the Joban Narrative; the Joban Dialogues; Sir. 35:10-11.

[2] See Meri-ka-Re, 110; The Instruction of Sehetep-ib-Re; 'Onchsheshonqy, Col. 19, 1.14, 24, 1.11; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, II, 12-22; Job 1:5, 42:7f.; Koh. 5:3f.; Sir. 45:23f.; Wis. 18:7f., 20f.

A fourth motivation for sapiential participation within the realm of the cult is based upon the affirmation that such has been commanded by the deity, and, therefore, the wise-righteous who fulfill their cultic observations are deemed "pleasing" to the deity, whereas those who are cultically negligent or who attempt to participate in cult while being wicked and foolish are categorized as "displeasing" and their service as an "abomination."[2]

Finally, we discover a fifth motivation for sapiential observance of cultic regulations to be that based on the desire to praise and to give thanks to the gods of creation, order, and retribution, praise and thanksgiving often found in the forms of thanksgiving psalms, hymns, and prayers.[3]

The Decorum of the Wise within the Realm of the Cult. One of the most important concerns of the wise in speaking to the matters of cultic religion and the sapiential participation within its realm was to instruct their adherents in the proper, sagacious decorum within the cultic sphere, and, as we have demonstrated, the standards for wise behavior within the cult are exactly those which have been established for wise behavior in the various compartments of world order, including the court, social institutions, profession, etc.

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[1] See the Papyrus Insinger, 16:1-3; and Sir. 7:29-31, 45:20-22.

[2] See Meri-ka-Re, 63f., 129f.; Papyrus Insinger 2:9; A Man and his God, 117f.; the Shamash Hymn, 100, 106, 119; I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, II, 33-35; Prov. 15:8, 21:27, 28:9; Job 31: 26-38, 42:7f.; Koh. 5:3f.; Sir. 34:18-35:20; Wis. 14:11.

[3] Meri-ka-Re, 131f.; Amen-em-Opet, vii, 7-10; the Shamash Hymn; Sir. 39:12-35, 51:1-12; Wis. 9, 10:20-21, 16:28-29, 18:9; Wisdom Pss. 19A, 19B, 32, 34, 73, 119.

Thus we find the wise arguing that the proper and acceptable worship to the gods is that offered by the wise-righteous who have shaped their thoughts and actions in the mould of the ideal wise man. This intimates that cultic and non-cultic arenas were considered to be integrally entwined within the structure of world order. In addition, one who was not sagacious in his decorum inside and outside the realm of cult received the punishment and even total destruction which was his due according to the principle of retribution. The sages especially ridicule and lambast the wicked fool who does not live in accordance with the laws of world order, and foolishly believes that cultic participation will still garner for him divine blessing. Thus the sage who worships in the realm of the holy should incorporate the behavior of the wise in general, including the characteristics of silence, solemnity, and reverence, and should avoid the passionate outbursts of the fool whose ecstatic and garrulous behavior leads to his punishment and even destruction by the gods.

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C. The Wise as Critics of the Cult

Though we have demonstrated from numerous wisdom texts that the wise considered cult to be an important compartment of world order and, therefore, sought to instruct their followers in the proper participation within the cultic realm, it is by no means to be argued that they simply bowed the knee to cultic demands without intensely reflecting over and even severely criticizing various elements of the cultic realm.

The satirical proverbs aimed at the pomposity of the Kalû priest in Sumer demonstrate that the Sumerian wise had no reticence whatsoever in attacking foolish behavior and conceit even when it characterized the behavior of supposedly "sacral" groups. The warning issued to the chief priest by the Papyrus Insinger that failure to intercede on behalf of the people who were cultically observant would result in the verdict of death, and Sirach's gentle but firm prodding of the priests of his period to fulfill carefully their cultic responsibilities are texts demonstrating that the wise believed it to be their duty to instruct priestly officials, not in the precision of proper cultic rituals, but rather in terms of their primary responsibilities as sacred functionaries.

In addition to this criticism of sacred functionaries, we also find the wise attacking the popular misunderstanding of cultic practices, primarily in terms of lambasting a magical view of cultic rituals. A case in point is the casting of lots in Israelite divination, a process which could easily be seen by popular understanding to be a magical means of determining the future. Thus the sages emphasize that such a process is not automatically tied to some causal nexus, but rather is entirely dependent upon the will of the deity who gives the proper answer through the means of Urim and Thummim.[1] A similar criticism of the magical understanding of sacrifice seems to be at work in the affirmation that sacrifice has the potential to remove the destructive powers of sin only because the ritual is based upon the faithfulness and steadfast love of the deity who has promised his followers to remove sins through the means of sacrificial offerings.[2]

Certain types of cultic behavior which were considered to be out of harmony with sagacious decorum also fell beneath the bludgeoning of sapiential attacks, including, for example, Ani's lambasting of the garrulous behavior of the passionate man within the sphere of the holy, and Koheleth's comparable attack of the worship of fools who, in their ecstatic devotion to the deity, often become entrapped in the destructive side of the holy and are consumed by divine rage. More specifically, the interpretation of dreams as omens and signs sent by the gods to warn the pious of impending doom is singled out by some of the ancient Near Eastern sages for special criticism (Ani and Koheleth), since the frenzied cultic activity of the recipients of dreams is based upon the false assumption that dreams are omens of the gods, whereas in truth they are the result of overwork and the subsequent mental duress which accompanies overwork. Fertility rites are another example of a cultic practice which receives the barbed criticisms of the wise, for the wise is not one, generally speaking, who loses his self-control even in cultic participation, nor does he participate in cultic practices which breach the code of ethical behavior as drawn up by the wise.[1] Finally, in terms of the ethical code of the sages, it is apparent that the wise totally reject as "abominable" cultic participation by the unrighteous who engage in improper activities outside the cultic sphere. It is imperative, according to sapiential teaching, that the person who participates within the realm of the cult must be one who is righteous and upright in all of his activities.

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[1] Prov. 16:33.

[2] Prov. 16:6.

Now it is most apparent that certain of the sages engaged in poignant reflections and even severe doubts about the validity and value of cultic religion, while others affirm without question its importance to the followers of wisdom. This polarity in thought may best be explained in terms of the polarity existing in wisdom circles which encompass both traditional wisdom and critical wisdom. Thus during periods of historical and/or personal crises and despair, we often find the sages reflectively criticizing and even doubting the validity and values of cultic religion. In Egypt both mortuary religion and the cult of the Pharaohs were lambasted by the critical wise of the First Intermediate Period,[1] while in Mesopotamia personal crises coupled with societal disruptions gave vent to the agonizing despair of the authors of "The Babylonian Thedicy" and "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom" whose doubts concerning the validity of cultic claims led them to the brink of abandoning cultic religion, but the conclusions still point to the avowal of the validity of cult. In Israel, the Joban poet takes to task the theology and practice of the lament-thanksgiving cycle, and though the theological basis of the ritual becomes altered from the expectation of reward for piety to disinterested piety, it seems that the Joban poet places cultic piety in terms of the lament in the mouth of Job. Koheleth, who was unable to perceive any just order permeating the universe and who viewed God as an inscrutable, incalculable, transcendent despot, questions the efficacy of prayers, especially enthusiastic and passionate outpourings of speech to a transcendent deity made with the expectation of the divine blessing, the dogma of divine immanence, and the idea of beneficence achieved through the channel of cult in general. To Koheleth, the destructive power of the holy was the only divine power with which one was confronted as he entered the cultic realm.

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[1] Prov. 7; Wis. 12:2f., 14:22f.

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[1] See The Dialogue of a Man Tired of Life with his own Soul, Ipu-wer, and A Harper's Song.

And yet in the intense struggles and doubts of the critical wise, we find only one text which denies the validity and value of cultic observances: "The Dialogue of Pessimism." Otherwise, the questionings of the wise during times of crisis often were the arrows aimed at, but always eventually diverted from, the heart of cultic religion, allowing once again the eventual reconciliation of wisdom and cult in sapiential circles.

D. The Question of Sapiential Avoidance of Cultic Provincialism

It has become commonplace to suggest that the wise, especially the wise in the older periods of their respective traditions in the ancient Near East, were cosmopolitan internationalists who, being possessors of a worldly *savoir-faire*, disdained and, therefore, remained apart from the provincialism of local and national cults. However, when Egypt ruled the East during the Amarna Age, and Amon-Re sat enthroned over the state pantheon, Ani speaks of the wondrous rule of Amon-Re. Furthermore the Egyptian sages, with duly noted exceptions, are intimately involved in mortuary religion and service to the divine Pharaoh, cults which are uniquely Egyptian. Divination, exorcism, and service to one's personal god and goddess are characteristically Mesopotamian, while the attacks levelled against other religions and illicit cultic practices belong to the Israelite circles of wise men, including the writers of Proverbs 1-9, the Joban poet, Sirach, and the author of Wisdom.

Thus it is highly questionable whether the sages, even the earliest wise, were quite the internationalists we have often depicted them to be. At least this would seem the case with respect to the question of cults.

E. The Wise as Creators of Cultic Literature

It may well have been the case that certain wise participated in the realm of the holy by contributing didactic psalms meant to be used in the cultic services. At least this is a tenable hypothesis, since we do find a number of wisdom psalms in the psalter such as 1, 19B, 73, and 119 which could have served such a function. We also find other examples of wisdom psalms embedded in the writings of the wise, some of which possess the character of sapiential psalms, and are, therefore, not simply borrowed by the formulators of sapiential tradition who insert them into wisdom texts. Thus Meri-ka-Re, "The Dialogue of a Man Tired of Life with his own Soul," and Sirach contain hymns, laments, and thanksgivings, while "The Instructions of Sehetep-ib-Re," "A Harper's Song," and the "Shamash Hymn" are wisdom psalms probably used in cultic service.

Of course it is impossible to conclude conclusively that these were intended for cultic worship by the sages, though this is a viable hypothesis.

F. The Question of Sapiential Usage of Cultic Language

We have only briefly touched on the issue of the sapiential usage of cultic language, and thus are able to offer only a few tentative suggestions in this regard. The wise often use the term "abomination" and the opposite term "pleasing" to speak of cultic behavior by the wicked-foolish as contrasted to that of the righteous-

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wise. If such pronouncements were originally cultic, and it is by no means certain that this is the case, this may be an example of the appropriation of cultic language by the wise to express the sapiential emphasis on wise and righteous behavior as contrasted to that of wicked and foolish behavior. Thus it is the ethical behavior and not the concept of sacral taboos and ideas of clean and unclean that concern the wise. However, it would be incorrect to suggest that the priests did not use the designations of "abomination" and "pleasing" as ethical categories.

We are on more certain ground when examining the usage by the wise of cultic language with respect to the descriptions of Dame Wisdom and the Strange Woman, since in several instances it is obvious that religious language, in this case the descriptive language depicting the fertility goddesses, is appropriated to contrast the love for wisdom which leads to life with the lust for illicit sexual intrigue which leads to death.

Finally, the sapiential usage of the term *'ashrê*, a designation which possibly may have derived from the cultic practice of cursings and blessings (*b^{e}rāḵāh*), was taken from the sphere of the holy to speak of those who are characterized by wise and righteous behavior in every sphere of world order, including cult, and who have come to experience well-being.

G. Sapiential Forms and References to Cult

An interesting point that we have made from our analysis of the views of cult in the wisdom literature of the ancient Near East is

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that only a very small number of references to cult are found in proverbial literature, thus leading us to conclude that when the wise spoke of cult they clothed their remarks in the garb of the instruction, the Streitgespräch, and the "Reflection on the Lament-Thanksgiving Cycle." Thus conclusions made by some scholars that the pre-exilic wise in Israel were disinterested in or even disdainful of cult are tenuous, since such conclusions rest upon Prov. 10-31, most of which consists of the various types of simple sayings of sapiential language.

H. Conclusion

We set as our task the two-fold purpose of critically examining the references to cult in the wisdom literature of the ancient Near East and of analyzing the didactic psalms written by the wise. We trust we have laid to rest once and for all the incorrect assumption made by earlier scholars that the cult was of little or no concern to the wise, and that when the subject of cult was broached, it was done so with a critical bias. It is our conclusion, supported by extensive documentation from the primary sources, that the wise regarded the realm of cult to be an important compartment within the orders of reality, and, therefore, merited sapiential scrutiny and demanded sagacious participation. Secondly, our structural analyses of the wisdom psalms composed by the sages should point the way to a means of identifying wisdom psalms and distinguishing them from psalms influenced by wisdom forms and language. It is conceivable that the composing of these psalms by the wise was done with an eye to their being used in the sacred liturgies.

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We have not entered into the complicated efforts to draw up extensive comparisons and contrasts between the ideologies of the priests and the sages of the ancient Near East, say, for example, in their views of order, their relationships to myth, their understandings of deity, and their ideas of time. We shall leave these to future investigations. And it is here that we shall end our task.

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